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# THE THOMIST

A SPECULATIVE QUARTERLY REVIEW

EDITED BY THE DOMINICAN FATHERS  
OF THE  
PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

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VOLUME V

JANUARY, 1943

(THE MARITAIN VOLUME)

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This division of the year into two volumes affects in no way subscription accounts—the present volume representing the regular January issue for this year.

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# THE THOMIST

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VOL. V COMPLETE

JANUARY, 1943

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## EDITORIAL



THIS present issue of THE THOMIST is dedicated to Jacques Maritain on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. M. Maritain's outstanding position in the field of philosophical letters, his tireless labors and courageous thought, merit much more than can be given him by any such tribute. Nevertheless, THE THOMIST is honored to be the instrument of that tribute; and its readers will understand and share that honor.

Obviously, not all the authors contributing to this issue are Thomists; but all the contributors, Thomists and non-Thomists alike, have had the same aim, that of paying tribute to a Thomist in the one way that is at the same time a recognition of and a compliment to the goals of Thomism: by studies that play their humble part in bringing men closer to the perennial goal of lasting truth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though the tribute of the present contributors to THE THOMIST is primarily a personal one, it is, at the same time, very much more than that, for this tribute has been built by minds too widely separated to be commanded merely by a striking personality. At the very least, this tribute is a mark

of keen interest in the fields of M. Maritain's labors, the sources of his thought, and the fruits of the years of work he has spent in those fields inspired by those sources. In other words, these authors, in striking variety, have paid a tribute to Thomism, as it lives and breathes in the twentieth century, as well as to a living Thomist. There is no mystery about this particular Thomist's claim to such a tribute; but there might very well be much mystery, even in the minds of those who have paid the tribute, about Thomism's claim upon the interest of non-Thomists of this age of ours.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet the mystery is by no means insoluble if we take the very small trouble to place Thomism and our times side by side. Perhaps the one characteristic that immediately emerges as a common denominator is that of turmoil, the roar of combat and the confusion of battle.

Historically, at least, Thomism has been a child of battle. Thomas's whole career was a fighting one that demanded every ounce of his prodigious strength and every item of his incredible genius; the Thomism he left behind him, wherever it has deserved the name, has never been out of the battle zone. There has been one hard-won offensive after another as the forces of error and falsehood slowly gave way, yielding another outpost of truth to be fortified while the advance forces pushed relentlessly on. Often enough the fight has been bitter; more often, it has been won with a discouraging slowness; always, it has been a fight without compromise or negotiation.

Defensively, the battle has been no less constant. Guerrilla warfare, that constant sniping that is more an annoyance than a threat unless it be disregarded, has been measured only by man's capacity for inaccuracy and his fear of truth, and the mysteriously dark attraction of truth's perversion. Here and there, down through the ages there have been all-out battles, waged with a ferocity born of a full recognition of the final character of the fight; battles where the issue was a matter of life or death for truth.

\* \* \* \* \*



Men of our time are immersed in a war of the world. It is a war of ideas as well as a war of bullets, and the roar and confusion is not confined to the war of bullets. Sometimes both have been defined as wars to determine whether those fundamental principles which are truths will survive at all. At other times, the issue has rather seemed to be a determination of what principle the world will live by, a false one or a true one. The bitterness and universality of the struggle has been seen as the result of a clash of principles that make the difference between a life worth living and a life without meaning for the individual; on this count the sides would seem to have been badly chosen, for, with some of the opponents, the battle would seem to be a clashing of proponents of the same principle in a fight to determine who will be the concrete embodiment of that principle. Quite fundamentally, the ordinary man has seen much of the struggle as the deep, unyielding resistance of men to an open attempt to enslave them.

Long before the battle of bullets, and long after it, the battle of ideas goes on. Indeed, further procrastination of the battle of bullets might easily lose humanity the battle of ideas. For ideas, particularly enervating and disintegrating ideas, are easily laughed off as harmless idiocies by the contented mass of men. After all, a naked idea is not apt to startle a man from his sleep, to strip him of his comfort, deprive him of his food, or rob him of his life.

Only the particularly alert, i. e., those who take their own principles in deadly earnest, not for granted, see the turn of the war of ideas before the hum of bullets wakens men from their lethargy. These are the watchdogs of humanity, though, not infrequently, they are cuffed into silence by men who do not wish to be disturbed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beyond all doubt, the interest of the men of our age in Thomism is not an historical one; such an interest may well be practically nonexistent on the part of non-Thomists. Rather, Thomism has caught the eyes of our age as the possessor of

principles, of enduring truths worthy of any sacrifice and of the utmost loyalty and the hardest battle; for the men of our time have fully awakened to the solemn fact that there are things more precious than life itself. They have seen Thomism as a fighting champion of truths; and the men of our time know what a lie can do and what a fight is.

\* \* \* \* \*

It has not been hard to recognize Jacques Maritain as one of those watchdogs of humanity, taking his own principles in deadly earnest and alertly catching the tide of the battle of ideas while other men slept on. He writes with all the courage demanded of a man of foresight who tries to move his blinder fellows, and with all the love of humanity evident in the successful effort he has made to bring the present and the future to men in language they could understand.

If the tribute contained in this volume were merely a tribute to M. Maritain, it would be of little more than passing interest as heartening evidence of our admiration for human endeavor courageously furthered. But M. Maritain's labors cannot be divorced from the principles that have inspired them. M. Maritain is a Thomist; and Thomism cannot be casually brushed off once contact is made with it. This tribute to a Thomist and to Thomism is, then, a major event, not only for the past it recognizes, not only for M. Maritain to whom it offers a feeble human reward, but for the men and women who paused to make the tribute and for all those who, through them, will feel the repercussions of interested contact with living Thomism.

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The Editors wish to express their indebtedness to the Special Committee: Dr. William O'Meara of Fordham University, Dr. Mortimer J. Adler of the University of Chicago, and Dr. Yves R. Simon of the University of Notre Dame, for the invaluable assistance rendered in the preparation of this Maritain volume.

# JACQUES MARITAIN: A BIOGRAPHICAL IMPRESSION.

By HARRY LORIN BINSSE



IT comes somewhat as a shock to realize that nearly ten years have gone by since one day in early spring when Maurice Lavanoux and I were given the job of showing Jacques Maritain the sights of New York—or at least certain rather definite sights he himself had elected to see. The itinerary was simple enough, but carried us from end to end of Manhattan, no one of the “sights” being any too near connecting subway lines. The extravagance of a taxicab seemed the most practical solution; and since those were the days of deepest depression, when “independent” drivers were glad to listen to reason as long as the trip was fairly long, it was not an unduly expensive solution, either.

So we skidded gaily from East Fifteenth Street to the Harlem Y. M. C. A., laughing most of the time, for Hitler was not then long installed in his chancellery and the only refugees we knew were some old-standing Russians. The New Deal was new and shiny, and the future looked hopeful enough. For that is what I chiefly remember of him from those first days. A great deal more mirth than was in our own lives, and a great deal more sanctity.

Those two ingredients are still paramount, even if the first has been tempered a bit—and in all of us—by events whose issue is so vast it is beyond appraisal. One can only shudder and be sad and fear a little, and try one’s best to understand. There, almost, is Jacques Maritain’s character, in abstraction. Gaiety, which means love and proportion and humility; sadness at the world’s woe; trying to understand by the light of the wisdom God has given him. Always trying to understand.

\* \* \*

The bones of biography make up a simple skeleton.

He was born in Paris sixty years ago—November 18, 1882—



near the Place Clichy. (Very Parisian. He really has no eye at all for nature, and a keen eye for art. The country is a necessary evil in which to accomplish the annual task of relaxation and from which, mysteriously, the city draws its sustenance.)

His parents: Paul Maritain, lawyer, and Geneviève Favre, daughter of a great Consul of the Third Republic. One sister, no brothers. A nosegay of Lycées: Condorcet, Carnot, Henri IV. The University of Paris: the Sorbonne. Marriage. Conversion. Heidelberg and Hans Driesch.

His specialty: biology, gradually shifting to philosophy, without which—and in those days there was little of it—natural science is a tale signifying nothing.

Which brings us to 1908. The fashions of the academies like cobwebs had been brushed from his mind, but there was no true gossamer to take their place. What was needed also was time to refashion the underpinnings. But there were mouths to be fed, and an income needed to feed them. Charles Péguy pulled the rabbit out of a big publisher's hat: would he accept the general editorship of a *Dictionnaire de la Vie Pratique*? One cannot help slyly wondering whether, while *La Philosophie Bergsonienne* was maturing in the parlor, the *Dictionnaire* did not serve its own purpose of sweeping out the kitchen. It has remained well swept ever since. . .

Once the underpinning was firm and strong, the natural career of teaching—at the Collège Stanislas and the Institut Catholique, later at Toronto, Chicago, Columbia, Princeton, Yale—reasserted its sovereignty, and has remained sovereign.

\* \* \*

Apart from obvious things then—defense of the defenseless, eloquence and a new breath of life in the perennial philosophy, a scrupulous love for man and truth, and love of God—here is the substance of a life the world, our world above all, could ill have spared.

"*The Commonweal*,"  
New York City

# ON MARITAIN'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

By WALDEMAR GURIAN

\*\*\*

THE SIGNIFICANCE of Maritain's political philosophy will remain hidden to those who judge it by its acceptance in contemporary France. An impressive proof of its independent character is that it has been praised and rejected in the same camps. Until 1926 conservative rightist Catholics, taking advantage of the modernist crisis, claimed Maritain for themselves as the great philosopher of order and intelligence. He published many articles in the *Revue Universelle*, a periodical edited by Bainville, a friend of the head of *L'Action Française*, Charles Maurras.<sup>1</sup> The social and democratic Catholics then regarded him with some distrust.<sup>2</sup> But after 1926, when the Action Française was condemned by Pope Pius XI and Maritain accepted and emphatically defended this condemnation<sup>3</sup> (until this time he had been concerned primarily with speculative philosophy; henceforth he was to turn towards political philosophy), he was attacked not only by the Action Française, but even in the *Revue Universelle*.<sup>4</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles O'Donnell, *The Ideal of a New Christendom*. The Cultural and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain. A doctoral dissertation of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., (1940). Typed Manuscript. This well-documented study is indispensable to all interested in Maritain's biography and relations to French intellectual, literary, and social movements. "Maritain contributed three or four articles a year to *La Revue Universelle* until the condemnation of *L'Action Française*" (p. 26). Later on he participated in and inspired the foundation of the democratic periodicals *La Vie Intellectuelle*, *Esprit* and *Temps Présent*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. Archambault, *Les Jeunes Maîtres*, Paris, 1926, 81-116; on Maritain's political philosophy, pp. 106-111.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Primauté du Spirituel*, Paris, 1927 (English: *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, New York, 1931); the two volumes edited in collaboration with a number of theologians and philosophers, *Pourquoi Rome a parlé*, Paris, 1928, and *Clairvoyance de Rome*, Paris, 1929. As there was some hope that the Action Française would accept the decision of the Church, Maritain wrote his pamphlet, *Une Opinion sur Charles Maurras et le devoir des Catholiques*, Paris, 1926, which is several times quoted in *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Charles O'Donnell, *op. cit.* He writes about J. Desclausais' article in the *Revue Universelle* of June 15, 1936: "... sweepingly accuses Maritain of every

antipathy towards his work and public activities increased steadily among the rightist French Catholics, until it reached a climax during the Spanish Civil War. On the other hand, Maritain now won more and more friends and admirers among progressive Catholics. One of their writers, Vialatoux, contributed to Maritain's *Bibliothèque française de la philosophie*.<sup>5</sup> The periodical *Esprit* was strongly influenced by his personalism. The attitude towards Maritain's political philosophy was often unfortunately determined by practical politics, though Maritain himself insisted on remaining a philosopher, standing above all parties and objectively grasping their particular spirit and psychologies, as his characterization of the left and right mentalities in *Lettre sur l'Indépendance* (Paris, 1936) shows so impressively.

Is it possible to conclude from this change in Maritain's French audience that his political and social philosophy has changed too? Is it justifiable to oppose the Maritain of the first period, down to 1926, in which he fought particularly the errors of modern democratism, the author of *Antimoderne*, *Théonas*, and *Three Reformers*, to the Maritain of the second period, beginning with his polemic against the Action Française, after which he became the most prominent spokesman of those Catholics who looked for a new democracy under Christian inspiration and rejected all attempts to restore the political forms of the past?

It seems to me that this distinction between periods in Maritain's work only helps to illustrate the *unity of the central motives of his thought and activities*. Maritain has been a Thomistic philosopher since he started to write for the general public. After a youth outside the Church, after becoming a

heresy condemned by the Church. A charitable estimate of the attack would regard it as a canard." (p. 451 f.) Those interested in the various attacks on Maritain by rightist Catholics, adherents of Action Française, etc., should read the documented accounts of Charles O'Donnell.

<sup>5</sup> Maritain's *Primauté du Spirituel* (French edition), contains a friendly discussion with J. Vialatoux, who later contributed a volume, *Essais de Philosophie Economique*, to Maritain's series and another volume, *Morale et Politique*, to *Questions disputées*, edited by Abbé Ch. Journet and Maritain (Paris, Desclée de Brouwer).



member of the circle around Péguy and after having been impressed by Bergson's lectures,<sup>6</sup> he became a convert under the influence of Léon Bloy.<sup>7</sup> Philosophy did not matter for Bloy, for he lived in the world of supernatural symbols and realities; but Maritain studied the works of St. Thomas Aquinas with the guidance of the Dominican Father Clérissac and accepted Thomism because for him Thomism is, in its substance, the expression of universal truth, able to incorporate the truth of all times and capable of being liberated from purely historical elements and additions. He has remained a Thomist.<sup>8</sup> His attitude toward the changing currents of thought, as well as his attempts to understand present political and social problems in a more perfect and a profounder way, has always been determined by his Thomism. It is not accidental that in *True Humanism* the doctrine of the plurality of civilizations, which destroys the acceptance of the Middle Ages as an obligatory model for all times, is developed with the help of a Thomistic terminology. Thomism is for Maritain neither a catalogue of terms, whose meaning and application is fixed definitely, nor an encyclopedia which has only to be consulted for the solutions of problems. The young Maritain emphatically opposed all attempts to modernize Thomism, e. g., to let it appear as a kind of Bergsonism and thereby to sacrifice its supratemporal features.<sup>9</sup> But that is not a contradiction to the endeavors of Maritain to demonstrate the vitality of Thomism by showing how it leads to a deeper understanding of the trends of our time.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ransoming the Time*, New York, 1941, p. 53.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Maritain, *Quelques Pages sur Léon Bloy*, Paris, Cahier, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> I quote only one of the many passages from the work of Maritain expressing his fundamental philosophical attitude: "It took centuries of Christian work and effort for the mind finally to emerge into the integral universalism which truth requires. St. Thomas Aquinas is the great exponent of such universalism developed in the intelligence under the light of faith. . . . The philosophy of St. Thomas welcomes all being, because it is absolutely docile to being. Its structure being as hard as steel, it is as extensible as may be. Its discipline being the strictest possible, it enjoys the utmost freedom." (*The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, New York: Scribners, 1930, p. 104). On Maritain's philosophy and its importance in general, cf. Gerald B. Phelan, *Jacques Maritain*, New York, 1937.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Antimoderne*, Paris, 1922, p. 156-157.

It is not too difficult to grasp the foundations of Maritain's political and social philosophy, which is determined by Thomism. To use a simple formula: Maritain professes to have a political philosophy, he does not hide it behind claims to have a science without aims, based on pure facts or derived exclusively from practical activity. Political philosophy deals with societies demanded by the nature of man. The decisive influence of Aristotle is obvious, hardly surprising for a disciple of St. Thomas. The societies demanded by human nature have, of course, not only an exterior, protective, or material function. They are necessary not only for life, but for a good life, that is, for a moral and intellectual life. Here Maritain goes—with St. Thomas—beyond Aristotle. A purely natural political philosophy cannot know the ultimate end of man.<sup>10</sup> Aristotelian contemplation is not the beatitude of the Christian religion. Revelation liberates political philosophy—as all philosophy<sup>11</sup>—from the limitations which are the consequences of the factual weakness of the human reason. Furthermore, it puts before the human reason realities which, like grace and supernatural virtues, could never be found by reason's own faculties.

One example may illustrate Maritain's views on Christian political philosophy. Man as an individual, or as a part of a whole, is subordinated to society.<sup>12</sup> Society is seen not as some-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, New York: Scribners, 1930, p. 2 ff.: "The subordination of politics to ethics is absolute and even infinite, being based on the subordination of ends; for the good of the state is not God Himself, and remains far, far inferior to the supreme beatitude of man." And Maritain quotes from his *Une opinion sur Charles Maurras* ". . . The subordination is such—it is indeed infinite—that the strongest expression employed to indicate it will always be exceeded by the reality. The Ancients, even Aristotle himself, did not fully realize it, because they did not perceive with sufficient clarity that the supreme good of human life is God Himself. Christianity was needed to make that fully clear." Cf. also p. 126, where Maritain discusses the superiority in kind of integral political science ("which if truly complete must have reference to the domain of theology") to inductive political science. (Again quoted from *Une opinion sur Charles Maurras*.)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *De la philosophie chrétienne*, Paris, 1923. (The important introduction to the Austrian edition written by B. Schwarz deserves to be translated into English.)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Three Reformers*, New York, 1934, and *Freedom in the Modern World*,

thing exterior and material, but as something necessary for the good, moral life. But society is, on the other hand, subordinated to man as a person—a man is not only an individual, but also a person. The salvation of the person lies beyond the temporal good of society, though a rightly ordered society is not in opposition to the end of the person, but a way of attaining it. The true temporal *bonum commune* is subordinated to the naturally and supernaturally supratemporal end of each person—but in its order it is supreme. This distinction between individual and person which was inspired by remarks of the famous Dominican theologian, Garrigou-Lagrange,<sup>13</sup> makes clear the limits of Aristotle, who could not grasp fully the notion of personality. Therefore, the relation between polis, the highest society, and the member of the polis fluctuated for him. On the one side, the polis was the good life, the end of man; on the other side, it was a means of making possible contemplative, theoretical life. This life, of course, did not transcend the world; there is for Aristotle no revelation, no supranatural order, determining the ultimate end of the person and making it necessary to regard the temporal *bonum commune* as supreme only in its realm, whose right order in itself is no ultimate end.

The whole importance of Maritain's Christian political phi-

New York, 1936, p. 46 ff. On p. 49 it is emphasized that the "person as such aspires naturally to the social life. . . . There can be a society of pure persons," but "only in God" . . . "Everywhere else the persons who are members of the society are also parts of it; that is to say, the society is not a society of pure persons but a society of persons who are also individual beings . . ." A more recent formulation of the distinction between person and individual is to be found in *Scholasticism and Politics*, New York, 1940, p. 59, in the article, "The Human Person and Society." Maritain's personalism, for which the person is above stars, atoms and society—as seen from below, ordained towards the temporal common good—does not regard the person as isolated being: ". . . the subjectivity of the person has nothing in common with the unity without doors and windows of the Leibnitzian Monad. It demands the communication of intelligence and love." (*Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 64.)

<sup>13</sup> R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Le Sens Commun*, 3 ed., Paris, 1922, p. 332 ff. "Par notre individualité, nous sommes essentiellement dépendants de tel milieu, de tel climat, de telle hérédité. . . . La personnalité, au contraire, vient de l'âme, c'est même la subsistance de l'âme indépendamment du corps."

losophy can be realized fully only if it is studied not in its most abstract formulation, e. g., in the distinction of individual and person, but in its connection with historical and temporal movements. Maritain's thought illuminates intellectual and historical types and developments which would remain unintelligible without it. Therefore, it is impressive and valuable also for those non-Christian or non-Catholic students who are unable to accept its last foundation, the Christian revelation, which does not destroy, but completes nature. In their eyes revelation appears only as a natural historical or psychological fact. They do not believe that God has really spoken to the world and to them.

All politics is based on specific images of man and on specific views of the ultimate end of human life. Scientism and positivism are also metaphysics—in spite of their denials. A political science based apparently and exclusively on statistics and empirical observations, unconsciously, and therefore uncritically, makes those decisions which determine the selection of the statistics and the direction of the observations. The fecundity of the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy in the hands of Maritain is manifested by the many insights into the history of ideas which can be found in the works of the French philosopher. Here we can observe a certain change in his attitude, some shift of emphasis in the points of view of the two periods. The younger Maritain—the Maritain concerned above all with speculative philosophy,—was inclined to study the modern world in its movements of defection and apostasy.<sup>14</sup> He observed primarily the spiritual and intellectual secularization characteristic of modern times. He analyzed the transposition of aims from a superior to an inferior order (e. g., the case of Rousseau for whom sentiment is the highest all-determining power). He noted the ignorance of human limitations, e. g., the case of Descartes who identified human knowledge with that of the angels. These studies, especially *Three Reformers*, have been

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Antimoderne*, Paris, 1922; *Théonas* (2 ed., Paris, 1925, Engl., 1933, New York) *Trois Réformateurs* (New ed., 1925, Engl., 1934).



misunderstood as expressions of a narrow-minded fanaticism, hating blindly and without discrimination. Some people noted only the ironical remarks and the polemics. But it may be of interest to point out that a prominent living French philosopher, glancing through the chapter on Descartes in *Three Reformers*, stated that he would not have anything to do with Maritain. Later, however, after a careful study of Maritain's works, he declared: "I am not at all sure that even we who admire him so much are fully alive to the lasting significance of his work."

Particularly important in this first period are Maritain's polemics against the modern belief in progress and against Rousseauistic Democratism.<sup>15</sup> The belief in automatic progress is rejected, because it misunderstands the ends of political and social life. Technical and material improvements alone cannot determine the ends. Rousseauistic Democratism is opposed because its sentimental equality makes all social order impossible. This criticism of modern dogmas (those of nineteenth-century Europe) has made Maritain appear to be an ally of the party of order. Owing to a misunderstanding he was on friendly terms with some of its intellectuals, but in his heart he remained always alien to this party. Even during the period when he was an appreciated contributor to the periodical of Bainville, *La Revue Universelle*, he rejected the belief in a political and social order fixed in itself<sup>16</sup> and he fought against belief in automatic progress and a Rousseauistic Democracy

<sup>15</sup> Against myth of progress cf. *Théonas* VII and VIII; and for a more comprehensive analysis, *Freedom in the Modern World*, New York, 1935, and *True Humanism*, New York, 1936; against Rousseau's democratism cf. *Three Reformers*, III, Rousseau, and for particularly short and striking formulations cf. *Ransoming the Time*, p. 16 ("... a pseudo-Christian error"); cf. also *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, p. 132: "Democratism, or democracy as conceived by Rousseau . . . the religious myth of Democracy, an entirely different thing from the legitimate democratic regime. . . ." But American Democracy owes "little to Rousseau" and is regarded very favorably by Maritain (*Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 90). The same chapter repeats the criticism of Rousseau, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e. g., *Antimoderne*, especially "Réflexions sur le Temps présent," p. 195. "Tout ordre n'est pas bon par soi seul (il y a un ordre chez les démons)."

from the point of view of human freedom, because he regarded them as dangerous attempts to deprive the men of modern times of their true homes and their true spirit by abandoning them to non-human and subhuman conditions.

One can observe a certain apocalyptic trend in Maritain's writings, especially of this first period.<sup>17</sup> The world approaches a catastrophe. The dominant political and social powers completely ignore a true order. Most men are de facto bad. As St. Thomas puts it, they live only by their senses. There is an awareness of the true order in his political thought before 1926, but this appears in a more negative form, as a general interpretation of the secularization typical of modern times.

The period in which he actually entered the field of political and social philosophy is characterized by a more differentiating attitude towards the modern world, but without change in his fundamental principles. The primacy of the spiritual<sup>18</sup> is opposed even more emphatically to a belief in a self-sufficient order, which makes a temporal form into a final end. A purely empirical investigation, as conducted by the Action Française, is described as unsatisfactory, incapable of replacing the missing true political philosophy. Maritain's Christian political philosophy, developing after 1926, emphasized more and more the

<sup>17</sup> *Antimoderne*, "Réflexions sur le Temps présent," p. 174: "A vrai dire, depuis le déclin du moyen âge l'histoire moderne est-elle autre chose que l'histoire de l'agonie et de la mort de la chrétienté? . . . Jeanne d'Arc, si elle a réussi à délivrer la France, a échoué dans sa mission de rappeler la terre au respect du Droit chrétien."

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, p. 4, where St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, II-II, 58, 5 is quoted: "Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum et secundum omnia sua." Then Maritain continues in order to prove the superior character of the Church: "But in that order of eternal life the individual is no more self-sufficient—even less than in the temporal. By the very fact of being ordered to the beatific vision, he is parcel of a superior whole, of a State which is a more perfect unit than the terrestrial State . . . we need the terrestrial State for the normal development of our nature, not for participation in the essence of humanity itself, whereas none can be made to share through sanctifying grace in the divine nature without belonging either visibly or invisibly to the Church." Cf. also p. 125, Appendix: *Politics and Theology* (Quotation from *Une Opinion sur Charles Maurras*.)

dignity and the proper ends of nature and temporal history—that of course is completely in the line of Thomistic thought.<sup>19</sup> What Maritain had begun in several works—*Religion and Culture*, *Freedom in the Modern World*—found its clearest expression in *True Humanism*, a series of lectures delivered in Santander shortly before the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>20</sup> The careful student of its principles and fundamental attitudes will note that nothing essential of the first period is abandoned or altered. The Christian political philosophy remains. The negative aspects and movements of the modern world continue to be described and condemned; also Maritain's latest book, *Les Droits de l'Homme*, attacks Rousseauistic Democratism as sharply as *Three Reformers*.

But we observe two important developments: The insight that there are several ideals of Christian civilization appears and becomes more and more important. The civilizations are not equivocal, not absolutely different from each other, having only the name civilization in common. Nor are they univocal, that is, in substance identical. Their pluralism is based upon their analogical character—they realize in different ways and from different aspects the principles of the one supratemporal truth and reality. This insight is connected with a comparative description of the sacral medieval, of the anthropocentric liberal or absolutistic, and of the Christian-inspired humanistic ideals of civilization. We note here how helpful Thomistic terms are for Maritain. In medieval civilization the profane realm tended to be regarded as purely instrumental; in the coming Christian-inspired humanism it will be an independent but subordinated end (*fin intermédiaire*), whereas in the anthropocentric-deter-

<sup>19</sup> With the rise of totalitarianism, Maritain insisted more and more upon the fundamental values of a democratic philosophy of life and society. Cf. his *Christianity and Democracy*, to be published soon.

<sup>20</sup> *Religion and Culture*, Paris, 1930. (Engl. ed., New York, 1931); *Du Régime Temporel et de la Liberté* (Engl. ed., *Freedom in the Modern World*, New York, 1935); *Humanisme Intégral* (Engl. ed., *True Humanism*, New York, 1937). *Ransoming the Time* contains the most important study on Equality, indispensable for the student of Maritain's attitude towards democracy and of his metaphysical opposition to all opinions which neglect the dignity of man.

mined civilization it is an ultimate end, either in an individualistic way or by making a temporal order absolute.

These descriptions of the spirit, of the ideal-typical attitude of different civilizations contain the most impressive rejection of the program: "We have to restore the Middle Age and its sacral civilization." The Middle Ages appear as an expression of a finished period, which has realized a definite form and order. To the accentuation of the organic unity and of the sacral Maritain opposes not the decadence of an absolutism closed in itself and of an anthropocentric individualism, but the personalism of a New Christendom. This New Christendom, the soul and heart of the true humanism, will recognize the existence of different religious beliefs and corresponding religious groups as a fact which has to be accepted. That, of course, does not mean a dogmatic toleration in which no dogma matters, because all can be true or all can be wrong. But the civil toleration does not exclude the orientation of all communities towards the temporal common good. Maritain believes that only the Christians who are citizens of the one *supratemporal* polis, the Church, know about the deepest foundation and ultimate finality of this common good, but it remains given to all groups, though in a more or less imperfect way, and not as an expression of a minimum of theoretical philosophical agreement, but as a common duty and work. The unity of the new civilization and its society will be determined less by exterior means than by friendship and the will to mutual understanding and cooperation. This Christian-inspired personalism is most different from a "religion of order" which regards exterior unity and acceptance of commands as decisive. It is at the same time opposed to an individualism which knows only societies mechanically united by interests, and which does not understand that persons can sacrifice themselves to the community just in behalf of other persons. Maritain's personalism is finally opposed to all kinds of totalitarianism which either deal with persons as a means and part of political and racial-telluric movements (Fascism and National Socialism) or, like Marxian commu-



nism, deny their intellectual and spiritual nature and therefore see their ultimate end in a material-economic order.

The dignity of the human person is the center of Maritain's New Christendom, destined to be the interior mover of the profane personalistic, pluralistic, and humanistic new civilization, and representing the form of worldly activity in our time by the members of the one church which is itself above all civilizations. Maritain's personalism permits him to appreciate democracy in a positive way. He no longer regards it in a traditional way as one of the political regimes nor does he identify it with an individualist Rousseauistic Democratism. Recognition of the rights of men which are based on Natural Law and on the Eternal Law of the Creator, is decisive for the democracy praised by Maritain. Active participation of all human persons in political life, control of the state by the people, and fraternal cooperation in common work under a leadership based not on inherited privileges and hereditary selection but on the necessity of having an authority to determine unity of action, are characteristic of this democracy, which is inspired by Christianity even though its members may not be Christians.

Maritain does not share the belief according to which special groups destined to exercise authority are the necessary expression of a supratemporal order. Authority can be exercised in different ways and under different forms. Maritain's democracy has not only a political but also, and perhaps primarily, a social character. It excludes antagonistic classes and does not hold the belief that the solution of economic and social problems will be brought about by substitution of the state for capitalists. Work for common tasks in communities, a kind of industrial democracy, appears to Maritain as a solution of the fruitless conflict between capitalistic and proletarian interests.

Speculative political philosophy has been connected by Maritain with an observation and interpretation of historical periods and temporal movements, which, as the author of the study *Freedom in the Modern World* himself emphasizes, have

no character of necessity. Maritain does not believe in an immanent compulsory development of history. He hopes that the new Christendom and the civilization moved and vivified by it will become a reality—but this coming is not inevitable, only a possibility. A catastrophe also is a possibility.<sup>21</sup> Politics does not belong to the realm of pure ideas and essences, but to the realm of contingent existences. Maritain is neither a utopian nor a cynic. He is not utopian because his concrete ideal of civilizations seeks only to grasp possible trends, but does not constitute an abstraction without relation to existing conditions and forces. His ideal is not a construction beyond space and time. Neither is Maritain a cynic, as are so many disabused idealists or believers in supernaturalism, who abandons the evil world to the forces of destruction. He does not separate the heaven of perfect principles from the realm of imperfect contingencies.<sup>22</sup> He realizes that historical time does not correspond to human time—one second of historical time can embrace whole human generations.<sup>23</sup> But he believes that there is a justice in history which is the work of providence, though, in the details of its realization, inaccessible to men. He rejects a

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Le Crépuscule de la Civilisation*, Montreal, 1940 (Lecture given in Paris, 1939, before the war.)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. "End of Machiavellianism," *The Review of Politics*, IV, 1 (Jan. 1942), p. 6: "... the toleration of some existing evil—if there is no furthering of or cooperating with the same—may be required for avoiding a greater evil or for slowing down and progressively reducing this very evil. Even dissimulation is not always bad faith or knavery. It would not be moral, but foolish, to open up one's heart and inner thoughts to whatsoever dull or mischievous fellow." This article must be read by all students of Maritain's political philosophy.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *End of Machiavellianism*, p. 16: "In saying that evil and injustice do not succeed in politics, I mean a more profound philosophical truth. . . . The true philosophical answer (to the question: Evil succeeds? W. G.) consists in taking into account the dimension of time, the duration proper to the historical turns of nations and states, which considerably exceeds the duration of a man's life. According to this political duration . . . I do not say that a just politics will, even in a distant future, always actually succeed, nor that Machiavellianism will, even in a distant future, always actually fail." And p. 19: "... the ruler who sacrifices everything to the desire of his own eyes to see the triumph of his policy is a bad ruler and perverts politics, even if he lacks personal ambition and loves his country disinterestedly: because he measures the time of maturation of the political good according to the short years of his own personal time of activity."

perfectionism unable to understand the character of prudential decisions which have to take into account the conditions and the mentality of the environment, of friends and enemies; this perfectionism is very often only the hypocrisy of those who excuse their own inability to act by pointing out general imperfections or faults of others. On the other hand, he rejects a political amorality incapable of understanding the ethics necessary for the good life of the community.<sup>24</sup> Political wisdom cannot be replaced by political techniques, nor the common good as political aim by power and expansion.

Particularly striking in Maritain's philosophy is its ability to unite supratemporal principles with a sense of concrete human and social problems, but always seen in their universal significance. Maritain sees temporal events primarily in their relation to a supratemporal order; that is demonstrated in a particularly moving way in his attitude towards France and towards the French catastrophe of 1940.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes he has been accused of being a French Nationalist, who ascribes to France attributes of universal human character. But nothing is more erroneous. Maritain regards the French nation *sub specie aeternitatis*, from the aspect of a French spiritual and intellectual mission, not replacing but representing and serving humanity. The French catastrophe appears to him as a consequence of a rupture between people and ruling groups. The people, in its substance uncorrupted despite all weaknesses and human errors, committed the fault of a too passive indifference towards political decisions and activities. It tolerated the more or less cynical behavior of its rulers, who had either lost belief in their own principles, or accepted openly a cynical amorality. Maritain is not interested in analyzing concrete

<sup>24</sup> *End of Machiavellianism*, p. 17: "Success in politics is not material power nor material wealth nor world domination, but the achievement of the common good, with the conditions of material prosperity which it involves . . . these very conditions of material prosperity . . . are not and cannot be put in jeopardy or to destruction by use of justice itself, if historical duration is taken into account and if the specific effect of this use of justice is considered in itself, apart from the effect of the other factors at play."

<sup>25</sup> *France My Country* (French: *A travers le désastre*), New York, 1941.

events and concrete forces in their interplay and mutual relations, but in the understanding of the moral significance of general trends. His political, practical philosophy retains always a speculative character and its interest in concrete events remains a moral and spiritual one. Maritain does not seek to be a political scientist, but remains always a political philosopher. He regards not technical activity, but the good life—a life which, as Christian life, is elevated in the realm of grace—as the last aim of men and of all human societies. The political philosophy of Maritain understands the concrete character of all politics, bound to time and its contingencies. He is neither a practical politician nor an adviser in practical matters, though a philosopher of the political praxis. A political scientist is obliged to take Maritain seriously, for he must understand the principles and general directions which determine his studies and interests.

Maritain has a particular position among Thomists (and perhaps not only among them) on the ground of his unique gift for utilizing the principles of his philosophy in order to understand the present day. Technical terms like analogy, discussions about the hierarchy of types of knowledge, open up astonishing insights into realities which are of importance not only for specialists and philosophers but for everyone. Nothing is more alien to Maritain than a mechanical dialectic moved only by a limitless urge to dissect terms. His political philosophy is aware on the one hand of the metaphysical and the ethical and on the other hand of the contingent, practical character of politics. Maritain's own development proves that he is in touch with life without having submitted to a dictatorship of changes recurring in a perpetual flux. The principles of his philosophy remain always the same; their understanding and application is perfected more and more.

But the most profound cause for the impression made by Maritain's political philosophy upon everyone who is anxious to understand it and who does not *a priori* suspect Maritain as a particularly clever propaganda agent, is the fact that his philosophy transcends philosophy. The Thomist Maritain is not



only the careful investigator of the structures and realms of being, whose unity as well as distinctions he tries to grasp. He is a man dominated and overpowered by the experience of reality. That unites him with those philosophers and great scientists who surely would not accept his interpretation of ultimate reality, but whose thought dominated their whole existence, and in such a way that their existence remained unexhausted by their thought. What gives Maritain a particular position is the fact that he is living in a great tradition, that his concepts are not only his concepts, and that he (as his Catholic students say) tries to participate in a wisdom which is not a created wisdom. During his first period, he seemed to be upset or impatient about the fact that the world was unwilling to accept the salvation which he himself had accepted. This anger and this impatience have become milder, have even disappeared. Maritain is today much more interested in the Christian background of all civilizations than in the description and condemnation of their negative moments, of their decay and apostasy. But his kindness conceals sorrow that the forces of evil in the world are stronger and more active than the forces of good. This sorrow over blindness and imperfections does not prevent him from feeling himself responsible for this world, this actual contingent world. The insufficiencies of the political praxis do not refute a political philosophy, which knows the natural and—with the help of revelation—the supernatural end of man and his civilization, whose variety is a proof of the supra-abundance of the Creator. The Creator is reflected in the images not only of each man, but in the whole of humanity and in all civilizations. No finite order, no civilization, can exhaust Him, Who is above the world, beginning and ending in Him.

Maritain's political philosophy reaches its aim in contemplation, but a contemplation which is not an escape from time and its struggles. The temporal common good is directed toward the ultimate good. The terrestrial cities must help the attainment of the Celestial City. Of course, the ultimate end remains, even if opposed by terrestrial conditions. But Maritain is not a sectarian regarding a world in which only saints

can really live as a normal situation. His religious belief is not anti-humanistic, but a True Humanism—not rejecting but trying to develop fully all human and social possibilities. Not despair but hope of redemption is the last leit-motif behind all his attempts to understand and to rescue society and politics in our time.

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# THE THEOLOGICAL INGREDIENTS OF PEACE

By J. C. OSBOURN, O.P.

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ANY peace pact among men which relies solely upon the enlightenment of philosophies is doomed to ultimate failure. The nebulous metaphysic of the idealist philosophies at one extreme has constantly elaborated over-pretentious dreams about the spiritual side of man only to see these dissolved and cancelled out by the opposite trend of materialist or romanticist naturalism which has always endeavored to compress the nature of man within the narrow and stuffy confines of matter. Between these two extreme and dehumanizing viewpoints stands the mean, the perennial philosophy of the Aristotelians; but this, too, is frequently forced to a frank avowal of its incompetency to gauge adequately the total dimensions of man's nature. There are realities and potentialities, vitalities and wells of energy hidden in the nature of man which escape the finest insights of mere philosophy. Among such realities it would be altogether fitting and proper to enumerate peace, since it is the mature fruit of truly human living, the connatural result, as we shall see, of a fuller evolution and understanding of human nature. On account of philosophy's inability to do full justice to the stature of human nature, it has failed and will consistently fail to prescribe the satisfactory formula for a lasting peace among men. Human peace, like human nature, thrusts its roots deep down below the surface realities of philosophy and draws its nourishment from sources which can be successfully tapped and analyzed only with the more precisioned tools of theology.

From a theological standpoint, however, the most significant account of man's moral, mental, and even physiological dimensions is unmistakably set down in Genesis to the effect that man was created to the image and likeness of God;<sup>1</sup> whereas

<sup>1</sup> *Gen.*, i, 26-27.

the theological conception of peace as the tranquillity of order<sup>2</sup> has undeniably close affinities with the Gospel message, "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will."<sup>3</sup> What are the tangible connections between these two Biblical statements? What bearing has the aforesaid theological evaluation of human nature upon the problem of peace conceived in terms of order and good will? What are the chances of a workable peace formula based upon such a comparative analysis? Can it be said—indeed, must it be said—that the essential conditions, the truly theological ingredients of peace among men, are to be distilled from just such premises as these? These vital questions will be examined in the following pages from the theological viewpoint in which they were invariably conceived and pondered by St. Thomas and his disciples. Our aim, therefore, can be accomplished only through a clear statement of St. Thomas's position on the following points of doctrine.

- I. The doctrine of divine likeness in man.
- II. The divine exemplar at work in the world.
- III. The influence of the divine exemplar upon divine likeness.

## I. THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE LIKENESS IN MAN

As to the general prerequisites for an image, St. Thomas is brief and to the point. To be truly the image of another, he tells us, a thing must proceed from that other according to a likeness in species, that is, in nature or at least according to some likeness which signifies the other's nature.<sup>4</sup> Two essential conditions, therefore, must be realized in an image. First, it must be a similitude derived from or expressed from its prototype. Secondly, there must also be found in the image, not just any kind of likeness, but a similitude in nature or in some sign, especially the figure,<sup>5</sup> proper to that nature. Unless these two conditions be realized a thing cannot be properly called an image.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 29, a. 1, ad 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Luke*, ii, 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 35, a. 1, c.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 2, c.



The first condition, then, involves a matter of origin. This procession or origin from its prototype which is demanded of an image may take place in two ways. First, generation offers the most patent example of origin or procession from another, and this, the most perfect mode of origin, is generally found in the line of efficient causality. The other case of origin or derivation from a prototype is that founded directly upon exemplar causality in which a copy is taken from the original, frequently, though not always, through the agency of some efficient cause other than the prototype itself. St. Thomas points out in this regard that an egg, for example, should not be called the image of its fellow for the simple reason that one egg does not originate from another in either of the two ways mentioned above and consequently fails to meet one of the essential conditions of an image.<sup>6</sup>

The second essential requirement calls for specific likeness in the image, and here again St. Thomas concedes as much elasticity as the necessary distinctions will permit. First of all, this condition will best be realized in cases of origin like that of son from father, in which the image, namely a son, is derived from the original according to specific equality or identity of nature. In another, less perfect way likeness sufficient to answer the demands of this condition can be found in a sign, such as figure, although the image and its prototype be of diverse natures. For instance, the figure of a king or president, which is nothing but the qualitative termination of his proper quantity, can be impressed upon a coin or carved out of stone. The stone or material of the coin differs widely from the man in nature, but not in figure provided the artistic figure has been copied from the natural figure of the man. This artistic figure, then, since it was derived from the man and signifies his proper nature by reason of similar configuration, can be called a true image of him. Let it be noted here again, however, that a man, no matter how close the resemblance, should never be referred to as an image of his statue, because he could not possibly have originated from it. It is only the converse, therefore, that ful-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 35, a. 1.

fills the conditions of an image and this even to the point of warranting a title to specific likeness through the mediation of sign or connotation of proper accident. If likeness is not found in either of these two ways, that is, in an equality of specific nature or in a sign of specific connotation, then there can be no specific similitude, since the second condition essential for an image will be absent.

It is altogether important to note a further distinction regarding the likeness found in signs. It belongs to the very nature of a sign, as well as to that of an image, to signify something other than itself or to call this other thing to the attention of those beings capable of reading signs or detecting images. With this in mind the Thomists have generally classified signs under the headings of instrumental sign and formal sign.<sup>7</sup> The instrumental sign serves the purely vicarious role of representing another from which it has been derived. It may be called an image of mere representation or configuration such as is found in the statue of some statesman. The formal sign carries its vicarious function in such a perfect manner as to retain formal, though cognitional, identity with its exemplar or original. This sort of sign is called an image of conformity and is realized only in the phenomenon of knowledge wherein the knowing subject, without losing its own identity or destroying the identity of the object known, becomes formally identical with the object known through the determinative influence of the object's perfect vicar, namely, the image of conformity. The image of conformity, being cognitively identical with the exemplar from which it is derived, justly claims far greater perfection in the line of similitude than the image of mere representation, which has only a dim and analogical likeness to the original, such for example as the likeness of a healthy complexion to the formal health in an animal. Since, therefore, the knowing subject becomes in a cognitional way the object known by coming into possession of the object's formal sign or image of conformity, the possibilities which such an image, cognitively possessed, has for

<sup>7</sup> John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, I, Lib. 1, c. 2.

rendering the knowing subject also an image of conformity with respect to the object known are immediately evident. It is this point which concerns us more than any other in our efforts to discover a divine likeness in the nature of man.

With these preliminary notions of an image before us, the more serious problem of squaring them with human nature in reference to God must now be tackled. Immediately it may be reasonably assumed that the first condition raises no grave difficulties to the mind of the theologian. Even philosophy can trace the origin of man to God on fairly solid grounds. St. Thomas, molding the finest testimonials of philosophy on this point into the general structure of his doctrine on creation<sup>8</sup> and bringing the cumulative weight of all learning to the service of theology, has built up an impregnable case for man's origin from God as from first efficient and exemplar cause. Nearly as much, however, can be said with equal certainty of all creatures, since all proceed in one way or another from God. Our real problem here, then, resolves itself primarily to determining the difference between man and other inferior creatures in their reference to God as exemplar. The answer to this difficulty will reveal the essential distinction to be made between an image and a mere vestige of any original, and its ultimate solution will hinge directly upon the second general condition mentioned above as essentially required for an image.

The question conceived from this angle shifts our attention momentarily to a somewhat closer inspection of God, the divine exemplar. It must be set down as a certainty from the very start that God, on account of His absolute simplicity, uttermost perfection, goodness, and other entitative attributes, can in no way be bracketed within the ten categories of Aristotle by any sort of univocal predication. God and creature, then, cannot be conceived of as univocally similar by reason of a common genus and differentiated by some proper characteristic which would set them off into variant species of being. According to St. Thomas, God is not contained in any

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, qq. 44, 45, 46; qq. 90, 91.

genus or species.<sup>9</sup> He is Being unparticipated and limitless. St. Thomas establishes this truth about God firmly enough by pursuing the classic *quinque viae*<sup>10</sup> through to their more evident implications.<sup>11</sup> In other words, from a consideration of limited, contingent, and participated being St. Thomas can definitely decide upon the existence of the unparticipated and all-perfect being whom we call God. In this way and according to our mode of apprehension God is understood and known under this most abstract and analogical concept of being as the First Uncaused Cause of all creatures. Moreover, this most general attribute, which we call being, is observed by reason to reside in finite creatures according to various degrees or grades of perfection in so far as some are corporeal or inanimate beings merely, others are living, others are cognitive, and still others are intellectual. This note of intellectuality along with its inseparable companion, volition, is verily the highest endowment discernible in the creatures of God. It is by this very perfection that man is differentiated specifically from all other creatures inferior to himself and shares in a certain communion of nature with the angels. Intellectuality, being an unmixed perfection with none of the dross of matter implied in its concept, is certainly compatible with the divine simplicity. In fact St. Thomas's proofs for the existence of God culminate in the demand for a divine intelligence whose nature is intellectual.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, since God's purpose in creating the universe is to manifest himself as He truly is, and since no other conceivably higher perfection than intellectuality has been manifested either by nature or revelation, it follows that intellectuality not only belongs to God but stands at the very pinnacle of divine perfections in our way of understanding, so that it is the specific nature and proper life of the Deity. God's life, then, and also His being, since the life of the living is their being,<sup>13</sup> not only as to the unity of the divine nature but

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 3, a. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 3-11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 2, a. 3: "Quinta via sumitur ex gubernatione rerum. . . Ergo est aliquid intelligens, a quo omnes res naturales ordinantur ad finem: . . ."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 18, a. 2.



as to the Trinity of Persons, consists properly and specifically in knowing and loving Himself according to the intellectual processions of the divine Word and the Holy Spirit of love.<sup>14</sup>

A true image of God, therefore, must be derived from God by some mode of origin and endowed with life which consists in knowing and loving itself, but more especially in knowing and loving God as God knows and loves Himself. We may set it down, therefore, as a general principle that the closer any being approaches the divine exemplar in intellectual nature or life the more secure will be its claims to a verification of the conditions required of a divine image. It is also a plain fact of theology which St. Thomas does not fail to remark that, "the First-Begotten of every creature is the perfect image of God, perfectly commensurate with that of which He is the image."<sup>15</sup> And certainly no creature could possibly ever realize the divine likeness in such a degree of perfection.

Irrational or non-intellectual creatures fall short of the barest essentials of God's image. True, they are imperfectly assimilated to God as the primary source of being, life, and knowledge in so far as they exist, live, and enjoy the paltry scraps of knowledge collected by the senses; but such similarity warrants no claims to divine likeness that would satisfy the exigencies of an image. They manifest by dim analogy the fact of divine causality and for this reason are said to be vestiges merely of their Primary Cause. They do not represent the proper or specific form and nature of this First Cause, as an image must, since it differs from a vestige precisely in that it represents the form of its cause, whereas the vestige represents only the fact of causality.<sup>16</sup> Not even as a sign diverse in nature but signifying at any rate the proper or specific nature of its original do they represent the intellectual nature of God. The reason underlying this contention is based ultimately upon

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 27, a. 3: "... in divinis sunt duae processiones, scilicet, processio verbi, et quaedam alia. . . . quae est processio amoris."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 1, ad 2: "... 'Primogenitus omnis creaturae' est imago Dei perfecta, perfecte implens illud cujus imago est: et ideo dicitur *Imago*, et nunquam *ad imaginem*."

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 45, a. 8.

the fact that immateriality is at the root of all knowledge and that intellectual knowledge and natures also as such are independent of matter. Now the most perfect of irrational creatures, namely, sentient animals, enjoy a very limited range of freedom from the restrictions of matter in that the particular forms of sensible reality are accessible to and capable of being imbibed by their faculties apart from the grossest bulk of matter. Yet the material conditions of singularity, such as time and space, cannot be transcended in this process.<sup>17</sup> A seal set upon pliant wax does not leave imbedded in the folds of wax the iron or other metal of which it is made, but it leaves its figure impressed there and according to the material conditions of measurement, space and time. In some such way as this, knowledge of particulars is effected in sentient creatures, but this process is patently incompatible with intellectual natures since they remain independent of matter and the conditions of matter. For this reason irrational creatures are incapable of attaining the lofty heights of intellectuality. For the same reason they are not apt subjects for the reception of divine grace in a formal way and, what is more to the point here, they are also incapable of becoming images of God.

On this horizon, then, between sentient or corporeal and intellectual or spiritual life looms the nature of man. It is also at this vantage point that St. Thomas stations himself for his most telling discernments of human nature. "Naturally," he tells us, "the soul is capable of grace: for by the very fact that it was made to the image of God, it is capable of God through grace."<sup>18</sup> Thus stationed, St. Thomas can glance down the descending slopes of man's being to the wells of matter where it is rooted in nature or he can fix his gaze upon the lofty peaks of the supernatural to which the fuller evolution of man's nature connaturally aspires and where alone man will ultimately find his most peaceful repose. The advantage of such a position from the theologian's viewpoint will become apparent.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 4, ad 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 113, a. 10: "... naturaliter anima est gratiae capax; eo enim ipso quod facta est ad imaginem Dei, capax est Dei per gratiam, ut Augustinus dicit."

It opens up two avenues of investigation both of which converge upon and radiate from man considered as image of God.

First of all, at the very confluence of grace and nature, but still on the side of nature, the faint outlines of a divine image can be discerned in man. By his very nature man shares imperfectly in the prerogatives of intellectuality. He is at least dimly conscious of this by reason of the fact that he is conscious of a natural capacity for universal truth and goodness. He is conscious of the capacity to place himself outside the material world about him as an impersonal onlooker. For that matter, he can stand outside himself, through the process of reflection at least,<sup>19</sup> which in the opinion of St. Thomas transcends the range of corporeal or sentient being,<sup>20</sup> and pass judgment dispassionately upon himself and upon his own actions; he can observe himself critically, approving or disapproving himself as well as his own doings. In other words, he has the capacity of knowing and loving himself, and such a transcendency over matter and its restrictions already places him far closer to a realization of divine likeness than any creature inferior to himself could possibly approach. Under the abstract and analogical concept of being man can apprehend God, the First Uncaused Cause, as an intellectual and volitional being who knows and loves Himself as First Cause. Thus man naturally learns of his origin from God and of his similarity to God, a being of self-knowledge and self-love, in this his very own capacity of knowing and loving himself as he is. By reason of his intellectuality, therefore, man bears the dim lineaments of a divine image.

From his careful survey of the downward slopes of man's nature, that is, of the sense and vegetative vitalities immersed in the corporeal organisms, St. Thomas can find nothing more than a material, dispositive, and secondary groundwork for the divine likeness in man. His sober decisions upon this phase of human nature certainly skirt the pitfalls of idealism and

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 87, a. 1, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *IV Cont. Gent.*, 11: "... non enim aliqua potentia sensitiva in seipsam reflectitur."

materialism with a balanced security, since they flow directly from the doctrine of matter and form or of substantial union between body and soul.<sup>21</sup> The body is not a prison violently restraining the soul's natural vitality; not a burden to be shaken off by the spirit of man, nor a shameful minion to be spurned by the intuitions of virtue as the Platonists and Stoics would have us believe. On the other hand, man is not, as the Romanticists suppose, so utterly a child of nature that his vision cannot look beyond the narrow horizons of body and what is material.<sup>22</sup> According to St. Thomas man is a substantial composite of body and spirit. The body naturally fills the role of a docile companion to the soul. So also the vegetative and sense powers, intimately correlated as they are to their respective spheres of the corporeal organism, form a cordon of helpful co-workers about the central and superior region of man's nature, namely, his intellectuality. In fact the close affinities between corporeal and intellectual elements in man demand a special configuration and coaptation of bodily structure which sets his off from all other bodies and gives meaningful significance to the Biblical assertion that man's body was fashioned directly by the Creator.<sup>23</sup> It is precisely this intimate relation between body and soul which seems to tempt St. Thomas to exploit the possibilities of discovering a divine image in man's body to their utmost and to suggest to him a so-called secondary similitude of God founded upon the fact that the entire human soul informs the whole body and all of its parts just as God is present in the whole universe and all of its parts.<sup>24</sup> But St. Thomas has to admit in the end that such a likeness can be only secondary and dispositive with

<sup>21</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 76, a. 1, a. 5: ". . . cum forma non sit propter materiam, sed potius materia propter formam; ex forma oportet rationem accipere quare materia sit talis, et non e converso. Anima autem intellectiva, . . . secundum ordinem naturae, infimum gradum in substantiis intellectualibus tenet; . . ."

<sup>22</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 77, a. 2, locates man on the borderline between idealism and naturalism in the following terms: ". . . anima humana abundat diversitate potentialium: videlicet quia est in *confinio* spiritualium et corporalium creaturarum, . . ."

<sup>23</sup> *Gen.*, ii, 7. See *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 91, a. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 3.



respect to the divine image realized properly by reason of man's intellectuality.<sup>25</sup> Hence the lower regions of man's nature reflect God not as an image but as a mere vestige, differentiated from that of irrational creatures only in its peculiar adaptation for underlying the true and proper image of God found in intellectual nature.

This natural image of God impressed upon intellectual nature betrays, however, all the imperfections of an image of mere representation which we described above. In reference to its exemplar it is as imperfect, considered from the viewpoint of nature alone, as a statue with respect to its living original. It is of a nature utterly diverse from the divine nature, and yet human nature stands forth as an instrumental sign tracing its origin to God and leading the mind to a conviction of God's existence and of His specific attribute of intellectuality. This image, like all images, being essentially relative or referable to its exemplar, can be reduced to the following terms: Man knowing and loving himself as he is represents God who knows and loves Himself as He is. Human nature, therefore, according to its note of intellectuality is an image of mere representation with respect to God and for this reason the preposition *to* (*ad*), according to St. Thomas, is inserted into the Biblical expression, "made to the image," in order to emphasize its imperfection.<sup>26</sup>

Another and more significant feature of this divine likeness found in man is its elusiveness to the natural light of reason. On the surface, it might seem a bit paradoxical to say there is a natural image of God in man's nature which escapes man's natural powers of perception. But it is noteworthy that St. Thomas never presumes to demonstrate philosophically the existence of a divine likeness in man from the fact of his intellectuality. St. Thomas never presumes to demonstrate man's capacity for grace and glory from the fact of a natural desire for these gifts, but frankly admits that this is a matter beyond the natural light of reason or, in his own words, "*praeter rationem*."<sup>27</sup> Neither does he presume to demonstrate the ex-

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4, ad 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 1.

istence of the Trinity from the fact of man's intellectuality.<sup>28</sup> He supposes the existence of the Trinity, and the existence of a capacity for grace and glory in man, just as he supposes the existence of a divine likeness in man's nature, on grounds of faith and revelation. This is evident from St. Thomas's mode of procedure, which usually takes as the point of departure in this matter a *Sed Contra* based upon authorities such as Genesis and the Fathers.<sup>29</sup> Once the fact of a divine likeness in man has been revealed, then St. Thomas, as every good theologian should, begins to call philosophy into the service of faith with a view to exposition and illustration. It must be kept in mind, then, that here at the very pinnacle of man's nature and still on the side of nature is a reality, namely, the natural capacity for grace and glory or, what amounts to the same thing, a true image of God, which escapes the discernments of natural reason and consequently philosophy's deepest insights.

The reason underlying the crucial point just made is to be found in the nature of an image. It will be recalled that an image as such is essentially relative or referable to its exemplar just as a statue is essentially referable to and unintelligible except in terms of its original. Unless the statue has some possible reference of similitude to its original, unless it is at least capable of representing or signifying an original, it is not a statue, not an image at all but only a lump of marble or bronze. Now we have seen how man is essentially referable to God and is a true image of representation in that he enjoys an intellectual nature which necessarily implies the capacity of intellection and volition. Our difficulty here, then, is to determine whether man by the light of natural reason can actually see that reference which really exists between himself and God as between image and exemplar. If he cannot, he is in the position of the amateur gaping at a fine statue of Julius

<sup>28</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, accepts the fact of two processions in God as a matter of faith and from this premise offers an argument of fittingness from similar processions found in intellectual creatures.

<sup>29</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 1, *Sed Contra*; a. 2, *Sed Contra*.

Caesar without appreciation because he has never heard of its original. The statue means nothing to him and as far as he is concerned fulfills none of the conditions of an image. If, on the other hand, man's unaided reason can actually see this reference, then it can also know God as He really is and knows Himself. This is an accomplishment, in St. Thomas's opinion, that involves the impossible.<sup>30</sup>

The transparency of the term involved in the relative character of an image, therefore, directly conditions its perceptibility. Man can naturally perceive a faint analogy between himself and God in that his own capacity of knowing and loving himself leads him to affirm a similar perfection in God, the First Cause. This First Cause, however, the original of man as copy, besides Its unity of nature is also a Trinity of Persons knowing and loving Itself as It really is. Here then is the step which natural reason cannot take alone. Man in knowing himself knows by reflection that this very process of intellection is vitally expressed and kept living before his attention by what the Thomists call the *species expressa* or mental word.<sup>31</sup> He cannot without further enlightenment, however, conclude from this, his own intellectual life, that the analogous process in the First Cause is terminated by a Subsistent, Consubstantial, and Coeternal Word.<sup>32</sup> Man's intellectual nature, therefore, is naturally an imperfect though proper image of the Trinity, since God as triune is the cause of creatures and also knows Himself in this way. But intellectual nature concretized in creatures cannot explore or even dream of this triune term of reference which specifies its tendential status

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 12, a. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 7: "Verbum autem in anima nostra sine actuali cogitatione esse non potest." Cajetan, in *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1, n. XVI; Ferrariensis, in *Contr. Gent.*, I, 53, n. IV; John of St. Thomas, *De Sacro Trinitatis Mystero*, Disp. XII, a. 4, n. 27.

<sup>32</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1: "Non ergo accipienda est processio secundum quod est in corporalibus, vel per motum localem, vel per actionem alicujus causae in exteriorem effectum, . . . sed secundum emanationem intelligibilem, utpote *verbi intelligibilis a dicente*, quod manet in ipso. Et sic *fides catholica* processionem ponit in divinis."

as image without the assistance of gratuitous revelation. This very significant fact about man's status as image of God explains the inability of philosophy to dictate more than a dispositive groundwork for peace among men.

At this point we are prepared to cross over the line of demarcation between nature and grace in search of a more perfectly developed image of the Trinity superimposed upon the natural image, which we have just been exploring. Already we have seen that the intellectual nature of man is naturally an image of God by mere representation and not by conformity, because the abyss between God known indirectly or mediately through the mirror of creation and God known immediately as He really is in Himself cannot be crossed by the natural light of reason alone. But, mindful that the natural image in man is also a capacity for grace, we should not be surprised to find here in man's state of gratuitous elevation that the natural image following the fortunes of grace has evolved into what St. Thomas is pleased to call an image of conformity.<sup>33</sup> Certainly an image of mere representation in the line of knowledge has a natural tendency to become an image of conformity, just as the imperfect tends to the perfect, for knowledge is essentially assimilative. It is a natural capacity for attaining God in those ways which are proper to such an attainment, namely, through the process of intellection and volition further actuated by grace. To know God as First Cause fans up the flame of natural desire to know Him as He is. But the actual passage from desire to realization, the actual reference of conformity between God and man in the line of knowledge, depends both in its inception and in its consummation upon supernatural grace, namely, the light of faith and of divine glory.

<sup>33</sup> *Q. D. de Ver.*, q. 10, a. 7: "Sed in cognitione qua mens nostra cognoscit se ipsam, est representatio Trinitatis increatae secundum analogiam, in quantum hoc modo mens cognoscens se ipsam verbum sui gignit, et ex utroque procedit amor. Sic Pater se ipsum dicens, Verbum suum genuit ab aeterno, et ex utroque procedit Spiritus Sanctus. Sed in cognitione ipsa qua mens ipsum Deum cognoscit mens ipsa Deo conformatur, sicut omne cognoscens, in quantum hujusmodi, assimilatur cognito." Also *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, aa. 4, 8.



The theological reasoning of St. Thomas runs along the following lines: God could not enjoy infinite bliss and peace, in fact could not be God, except in the absolutely perfect realization of an eternally uninterrupted and unlimited act of knowing and loving Himself as He really is, since He is really the most perfect intellectual nature both subjectively and objectively.<sup>34</sup> Neither can man ever be perfectly happy and completely at peace until his destiny is reached, until his capacity for possessing God intellectually through the light of glory has been realized. His eternal destiny *de facto* consists solely in the uninterrupted and unhampered activity of his highest faculties, namely, intellect and will, bent to fullest capacity upon the most noble object accessible to them. Anything, St. Thomas adds, realizes its destiny in so far as it is conjoined proportionately to its immediate principle, since the end of a thing corresponds to the principle of that thing.<sup>35</sup> But God known through the supernatural light of revelation is the immediate principle of man's soul and intellectuality. Therefore, God seen under the same aspect is the ultimate end of man. This is eternal life for man, namely, beatific vision and love of God as He knows and loves Himself. To be conjoined with God directly or immediately by knowledge and love implies intellectual (cognitional and volitional) identity or conformity with God. To attain God in such a manner requires Godlike activity.

The glaring disproportion between such activity and man's natural activity can only be toned down and balanced by the divine light of glory.<sup>36</sup> Since the divine essence, to our way of understanding, is the root principle of God's activity, then the light of divine glory must be a formal, though accidental, participation of the divine essence. For it fortifies, not as objective but as subjective intermediary,<sup>37</sup> the natural vitalities of man's intellectuality to such a pitch that he can look upon God directly and see Him objectively as He sees Himself, though

<sup>34</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 26, a. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Banez and John of St. Thomas on I, q. 12, a. 5.

infinitely less comprehensively.<sup>38</sup> This light of glory, then, is demanded, not as an *impressed* or *expressed species* to render God, the one perfectly intelligible object, more intelligible, but rather to elevate man to the supernatural plane of conformity with the divine essence so that as knowing subject he becomes cognitively the object known. A more perfect conformity between God and man is inconceivable. This is the highest degree of evolution of which the divine similitude in man is capable. It is a consummation to be realized only in heaven where eternal peace or the tranquillity of order reigns supreme.

In this life as wayfarer man may come to reflect a less perfectly developed phase of the same image of conformity which is impressed by divine grace and its inseparable companions, namely, the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Glory after all is nothing but the crown and consummation of divine grace. Grace is the seed of eternal life dropped down upon the soil of rational nature by the divine bounty, destined to grow heavenward and to flower into the ripened fruits of glory. The essential role of grace, like that of glory, is to elevate intellectual nature<sup>39</sup> to a plane of Godlike activity which ultimately, telescoped through the subjective virtues of divine faith and charity, puts us in immediate contact with God cognitively and volitionally, as He really is. It is true that our actual communion with and explicit reference to God, the supernatural exemplar, is in this life imperfect, fragmentary, and frequently broken. But grace and its cordon of supernaturally operative habits supplies a permanently fixed point of reference underlying the vicissitudes of our earthly affairs. By grace we are "made partakers of the divine nature"<sup>40</sup> and images of conformity to God.

<sup>38</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 110, a. 2; also *Q. D. de Ver.*, q. 8, a. 1, where St. Thomas remarks: "Restat ergo ut illud quo intellectus creatus Deum per essentiam videt, sit essentia divina. Non autem oportet quod ipsa divina essentia fiat forma intellectus ipsius, sed quoad se habeat ad ipsum ut forma, quae est pars rei, et materia efficitur unum ens actu, ita, licet dissimili modo, ex essentia divina et intellectu creato fiat unum in intelligendo, dum intellectus intelligit et essentia divina per se ipsam intelligitur."

<sup>40</sup> *II Peter*, i, 4.

Thus St. Thomas reduces the various phases of divine likeness in man to three, which he names image of creation (by reason of intellectual nature), image of re-creation (by reason of grace), and image of similitude or glory (by reason of divine glory).<sup>41</sup> The last two are phases of an image of conformity, the latter more perfect than the former. The first is only an image of representation. The last-mentioned image once possessed cannot be destroyed or lost, cannot even suffer diminution or tarnish by reason of sin, since such a state is beyond the possibility of sin.<sup>42</sup> The second, that is, the image of grace, can be utterly lost, because it is a sheer gift, not an inherent right of nature, bestowed upon man while yet a wayfarer subject to the shifting aims of a flexible will. In fact man lost the first grace with which he was created<sup>43</sup> and thereby involved the entire race in his fall to the extent that Christ, the Redeemer, was needed as the champion of restoration and reparation. Hence the image of re-creation is so named from the healing grace of Christ. The first image, namely, of representation, cannot be lost because it belongs to the nature of man, but it can be diminished and broken by sin.

In St. Thomas's opinion the fallen and unregenerated nature of man is a broken image of God. All of the essential parts and properties of human nature remain after sin, but they need to be rearranged like the scattered parts of a jig-saw puzzle or of a broken statue before they can reflect the meaning which they were intended to convey. The propriety and worth of such a metaphor is proved by the fact that St. Thomas thinks of sin as implying essentially a deordination and groups the various effects of sin on the part of the sinner under the term *wounds*. Just as the continuity of the body surface, he reminds us, is broken by a wound so also by sin the original harmony and order of parts in man's nature are disrupted. The natural energies and inclinations of man's faculties, originally centered, coordinated, and subordinated to the supreme good of God, under the wounds of sin become sluggish, dispersive, atomistic,

<sup>41</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 4.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 5, a. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 95, a. 1.

greedy for the temporal good of the numerous petty kingdoms in man divided against themselves and prone to ordinations positively contrary to the good of reason.<sup>44</sup> Original justice consisted essentially in that special grace whereby reason (intellect and will) was immediately subordinated to God, the lower vitalities to reason, and the body to the soul.<sup>45</sup> Original sin, then, in effect was the first privation or disruption of this marvelous order of parts, and all further excursions into personal sin on the part of the sinner essentially amount to a widening of the breach in this unity of order constituted by grace. Serious sin, therefore, completely obliterates the image of conformity from the soul of man, because it destroys the capacity for actual (conscious) and habitual ordering or reference of himself to God, his supernatural end known as He is in Himself. The capacity for grace, however, remains, and consequently the image of representation founded on intellectual nature; but it is shattered and broken by serious sin.

St. Thomas finds a vestige of the Trinity in all creatures in so far as all are compounds of the celebrated Augustinian formula, namely, *mode*, *species*, and *order*,<sup>46</sup> which applies also to unregenerated man. Besides this vestige in man, his status as image of representation, though shattered, still perdures because his representative reference or order to God as First Cause, though diminished, remains. It remains because the analogy, man is to his self-knowledge and self-love as God to His, still stands; it is diminished because knowledge and love of true self are proportionately weakened and shattered as man

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 85, a. 3. It should be remembered that a great deal of discussion has arisen on this point among theologians. For example, Thomas Lemos, *Panoplia Gratiae*, Tom. I, Part 2, tract. 1, and Sylvius, on this article of St. Thomas hold that man in the state of fallen nature is differentiated from man in the state of pure nature just as a wounded man is distinguished from a man who is naked. Bellarmine (*De Gratia primi hominis*), Suarez (*De Gratia, proleg.* 4, c. 8), and many others insist that man by original sin lost nothing of natural perfection but only the gratuitous gifts, so that there is only a rational distinction between man in the state of fallen nature and in the state of pure nature. St. Thomas steers a middle course between these two extremes.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 95, a. 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 45, a. 7.



becomes more deeply immersed in sin. From this reaction to sin suffered in the order of man's parts to each other and to God, we can already dimly guess the fate of peace conceived of as the tranquillity of order and proposed to or by unregenerated man.

This fragmentary image remaining after sin can be repaired only by the healing grace of Christ. Christ's office as Mediator and High Priest of the New Law constitutes Him the master-key to all the treasures of grace, with full dominion over its distribution. Normally, then, regeneration comes through Christ's divinely instituted channels, namely, the Sacraments, which are continuations and prolongations of His priesthood. Besides the grace of the Sacraments whereby we are made images of conformity to Christ as well as to the Trinity, some of the Sacraments also confer the sacramental character which renders us images of configuration with respect to Christ considered precisely as Mediator and High Priest. The sacramental character, St. Thomas tells us, is a participation of the priesthood of Christ.<sup>47</sup> It officially deposes us to receive or dispense those "greatest and most precious promises" by which we "may be made partakers of the divine nature"<sup>48</sup> and which pertain to Christian worship.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the character is an instrumental sign and not a formal sign, an image of configuration or representation and not of conformity with respect to that priesthood of Christ's which deposes Him to Christian worship as its author.<sup>50</sup> The character too, like the natural image of God in man's nature, remains under the ravages of sin; being also essentially instrumental, it, like the representative image of the Trinity, has a tendency or capacity, not a positive exigency,<sup>51</sup> to become an image of conformity, which as we have seen is constituted by the grace of Christ.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 63, a. 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 63, a. 3.

<sup>49</sup> *II Peter*, i, 4.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 2.

<sup>51</sup> Fr. Mannes Matthijs, O.P., has discussed this problem in a masterly way in his article: "Quomodo Anima Humana Sit Naturaliter Capax Gratiae Secundum Doctrinam S. Thomae," *Angelicum*, Vol. XIV, 1937.

<sup>52</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 93, a. 4: "Alio modo, secundum quod homo actu vel

There remains one more very important point to be made concerning St. Thomas's doctrine on the divine likeness in man. It is this, that St. Thomas finds the most perfect expression of the various phases of divine likeness realized on the plane of activity. This is evident from his mode of procedure. He proposes his treatise on the divine likeness toward the end of a long and thorough discussion of God as Creator, declaring by the very title over the entire question<sup>53</sup> that a divine likeness in man is the term or end (*finis operis*) of the production of man. But it is well known that St. Thomas frequently holds up activity as the end for which operative creatures exist.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, he has a special article under this general question in which he asks expressly if the image of God in man appears there by reason of man's powers, or his habits, or his acts.<sup>55</sup> His answer is that our first and foremost glimpse of divine likeness in man is to be had on the plane of action, since in this especially man imitates the Trinity of Persons in God, which is indeed founded upon the processions of actual knowledge and love.<sup>56</sup> Only secondarily or virtually is the divine likeness detected in the intellectual nature, powers, and habits of man, that is, in a manner similar to that of a full-blown reality in its undeveloped germ.<sup>57</sup> Finally, in his general prologue to the treatise on moral acts, which he previously referred to as dealing with the motion of rational creatures back to God,<sup>58</sup> St. Thomas, taking his cue from St. John Damascene, proposes to follow up his treatise on God, the divine exemplar, with a discussion of the image of God, namely, man considered precisely

habitu Deum cognoscit et amat, sed tamen imperfecte: et haec est imago per conformitatem gratiae."

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 93: "De Fine sive Termino Productionis Hominis."

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 1: "Cum enim ultima hominis beatitudo in altissima ejus operatione consistat, . . ." Cf. also I-II, q. 3, a. 2.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 7.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, "Et ideo primo et principaliter attenditur imago Trinitatis in mente secundum actus, prout scilicet ex notitia quam habemus, cogitando interius verbum formamus, et ex hoc amorem prorumpimus."

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 2, in Prolog.: "... secundo, de motu rationalis creaturae in Deum; . . ."

in so far as he is the principle of human activity.<sup>59</sup> It is certain, therefore, that he conceived of the fullest expression of divine likeness in man under the aspect of operation.

In view of this notable fact we shall now press our investigation beyond the bare lineaments of divine similitude, that is, beyond intellectual nature and powers into the sphere of more complete evolution where virtue and especially virtuous activity hold pre-eminence. An image is essentially imitative of its exemplar, as we have already learned from St. Thomas.<sup>60</sup> We have also seen that man's nearest approach to the divine exemplar is effected in beatific acts of vision and love for God as He knows and loves Himself. Such actions, we noted with St. Thomas, result in the joy, peace, and tranquillity of heaven. But our problem here in these pages is more concerned with a divine similitude, with a peace and order here on earth among men as wayfarers, where a pattern of activity far more complex than simple knowledge and love is demanded for peaceful concourse. Again, therefore, we must look to God, the exemplar of man, not this time to His most intimate life as lived in the Trinity, but rather to His operations as manifested in the order and harmony of the universe about us. It is only from such a study of the exemplar that we can hope to determine what activities on the part of man as image of God will be required as ingredients of peace among men.

## II. THE DIVINE EXEMPLAR AT WORK IN THE WORLD

This second step in our general procedure finds a convenient point of departure in St. Thomas's very theological evaluation of the universe as a whole. The feature of this universe which St. Thomas singles out as being the noblest and best of all is its order or harmony, that is, of part to part and of whole to

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 1, in Prolog.: "... postquam praedictum est de exemplari, scilicet de Deo, . . . ; restat ut consideremus de ejus imagine, id est de homine, secundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, . . ."

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 93, a. 4: "... secundum hoc est maxime ad imaginem Dei, secundum quod intellectualis natura Deum maxime imitari potest."

God.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, the order of the universe, he continues, is properly and primarily intended by God as the intrinsic end (*finis operis*) of its creation.<sup>62</sup> It is this marvelous order in the universe which moves St. Thomas and the Thomists to affirm that the present universe is the best possible one in view of God's purposes in creating.<sup>63</sup> However, when pressed to a judgment upon the merits of any one detail of the universe, St. Thomas was quick to say that the humanity of Christ, the prince of peace, holds pre-eminence among all creatures of the whole universe and is preferred even to the angels of heaven.<sup>64</sup> If, therefore, we limit ourselves to a scrutiny of the divine activity as manifested in these two outstanding monuments of God's operative attributes, namely, the order in the universe and the order of our redemption, this should be sufficient to yield a fairly accurate view of the original upon which must be patterned order and peace among men as images of God.

Lying at the roots of the universe and all of its multitudinous detail, and even beyond the operative attributes of God which immediately influence the world's intrinsic design, we can discern the divine goodness. St. Thomas tells us it is the fountainhead of all laws regulating the universe<sup>65</sup> and of all divine motives qualifying or molding the universal order of things.<sup>66</sup> The communication and manifestation of the divine goodness is God's purpose behind all things which He does outside of the divine life in the bosom of the Trinity.<sup>67</sup> The divine goodness, therefore, is the extrinsic final cause of the

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 15, a. 2: "Illud autem quod est optimum in rebus existens, est bonum ordinis universi, . . ."

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*: "Ordo igitur universi est proprie a Deo intentus, et non per accidens proveniens . . ."

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 25, a. 6, ad 3: ". . . universum, suppositis istis rebus, non potest esse melius; propter decentissimum ordinem his rebus attributum a Deo, in quo bonum universi consistit. Quorum si unum aliquod esset melius, corrumpetur proportio ordinis: sicut, si una chorda plus debito intenderetur, corrumpetur citharae melodia." Cf. Hugon, *Tract., Dogmatici*, Vol. I, p. 321.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 20, a. 4, ad 1; III, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 67, a. 4, ad 2: "Non tamen remittit (Deus) poenam nisi secundum quod decet suam bonitatem, quae est omnium legum radix."

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 21, a. 3; q. 44, a. 4; q. 47, a. 1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*



universe and so does not enter immediately into its intrinsic design and order. Moreover, the divine goodness is listed by St. Thomas as an entitative attribute and according to our human way of understanding it emerges to the plane of activity only through the channels of other divine attributes which are more immediately operative and are more proximate exemplars of the order and design of the universe. It is with these latter that we are principally concerned.

Among these operative attributes divine wisdom seems to hold first place if we are to follow St. Thomas's scale of values. Divine wisdom or intelligence engages his attention before any of the others,<sup>68</sup> and it figures most prominently and radically in the order of the universe. On one occasion St. Thomas saw fit to remark that the divine goodness would, in accordance with a tendency native to goodness, have proceeded to an infinite diffusion of itself into created effects were it not for the limits imposed by divine wisdom.<sup>69</sup> This response he bases upon a text of Wisdom to the effect that divine wisdom has "ordered all things in measure and number and weight,"<sup>70</sup> which expression parallels the Augustinian formula, *mode*, *species*, and *order*. The response harks back to the problem of possible infinity in creation, which St. Thomas as philosopher could never solve definitively<sup>71</sup> but as theologian has answered to his own satisfaction. God by His ordinary power, namely, the divine power as tempered by divine wisdom, cannot effect an infinitude in creation. St. Thomas's reason for this conclusion is that infinity in effects would clash with the order of the universe demanded by divine wisdom in view of the ultimate purpose for which God creates. A creature infinite as to essence is impossible, says St. Thomas, because it could not originate from any cause or principle and would be

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 14: "De Scientia Dei."

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Wis.*, 11, 21 as cited in *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. *Opusc. De Aeternitate Mundi*: "Et tamen non est adhuc demonstratum quod Deus non possit facere infinita esse in actu." This statement represents St. Thomas's last word upon the matter, since it was written in 1270 and consequently after the *Summa* and his other works upon the same subject.

equal in essence to God, the Uncaused.<sup>72</sup> But the idea and influence of a principle is essentially involved in order of any kind.<sup>73</sup> If we suppose a creature to be infinite dimensionally, numerically, or in any accidental endowment of his being, then we immediately run foul of the statement that determinate or limited essences require limited accidents.<sup>74</sup> This statement seems to be philosophically sound; but in any case an infinite magnitude actually existing would preclude the possibility of intrinsic order and design in the corporeal universe, since it would of its very nature preclude the possibility of plurality,<sup>75</sup> without which there can be no order at all.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, infinite multitude actually existing necessarily supposes infinite magnitude actually divided.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the impossibility of the latter depends upon the impossibility of the former and both in final analysis collide with the order which divine wisdom requires and constitutes in the universe. Hence we put divine wisdom down as an essential ingredient of order.

We also find St. Thomas devoting special questions to divine providence and predestination.<sup>78</sup> These too he accepts as operative attributes on the side of intelligence, but they are not without their admixture of the volitional element. They are by definition the divine plan pre-existing in God's intellect whereby all things are ordered and led to their ultimate end.<sup>79</sup> If, therefore, we disregard the volitional aspect and attend only to the feature of order involved in the aforesaid attributes, it becomes evident immediately that they are reducible to divine wisdom as to a central ingredient of order. For this reason and on account of limited space we shall pass on to an examination of the divine will in its bearing upon the order of the universe.

<sup>72</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 7, a. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 21, a. 3; q. 42, a. 3; II-II, q. 26, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 7, a. 3: "... cum igitur ad formam substantialem consequantur accidentia, necesse est quod ad determinatam formam consequantur determinata accidentia; inter quae est quantitas."

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 42, a. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 7, a. 4: "Sed esse multitudinem infinitam in potentia possibile est. Quia augmentum multitudinis consequitur divisionem magnitudinis: . . ."

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, I, qq. 22-23.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Those divine virtues or virtuous acts<sup>80</sup> formally pertaining to the will of God and most intimately touching the order of the universe are none other than charity, mercy, and justice. It is true that the first mentioned among these usually goes by the name of love throughout St. Thomas's question on this matter.<sup>81</sup> But this is due to the fact that he is discussing here the divine will's bearing upon all things in general rather than upon rational creatures in particular, and not, as is evident from his express substitution of the term charity in the very first *Sed Contra*, to any intention of quibbling over a supposed difference between love and charity as found in the will of God. In any case divine love, the first spark of life breathed into the cool blueprint of divine wisdom, certainly plays a key role in the order of the universe. It is here especially that St. Thomas emphasizes his faith in the grand principle of divine predilection. Since the love of God is the cause of goodness in all creatures, he tells us, no one creature would be better than another were it not for the fact that God wishes greater good for this one than for the other.<sup>82</sup> This principle applies, therefore, both in the order of grace and in the order of nature. A stone is inferior to a plant, plants to animals, animals to men, and men to angels because the quickening love of God breathes more deeply upon one than upon the other. Among angels and men in the supernatural order, the degree of grace or glory possessed by each is a sign of the measure of divine love which each enjoys.<sup>83</sup> Inequality, distinction, and multitude, which are indispensable to order, all reflect the trace of divine love or charity in the universe. Therefore this divine attribute has a prominent place among the formal elements of world order and harmony.

The quality of mercy, charity's eldest daughter, must be attributed to God maximally,<sup>84</sup> says St. Thomas, and later on he insists that it is the greatest of all virtues according to the

<sup>80</sup> God is pure act. Therefore, St. Thomas does not conceive of Him as possessing potential principles of activity as man does.

<sup>81</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 20.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4, ad 4.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 21, a. 1.

order which it constitutes between God and man.<sup>85</sup> Shakespeare gave a thumbnail sketch of St. Thomas's treatise when he said of mercy, "'Tis mightiest in the mightiest."<sup>86</sup> Of its very nature it stoops down to the miseries and defects of others with relief from above. In the order of grace and in the reparation of God's broken image in fallen man mercy shines forth most brilliantly. It adds a mosaic touch to the more general world order of divine love by diverting the plans of God's wisdom from the ordinary ways of divine providence into the by-passes of predestination where the charts of freedom call for richer variety in the order of the universe.<sup>87</sup> Figuratively we may think of mercy as telescoping the general effusions of divine love into the more transparent order (humanly speaking) of divine justice. At any rate divine mercy cannot be omitted from the pattern of formal exemplars which enter into the order of the universe.

St. Thomas, coming finally to justice, discovers only one species of particular justice existing formally in God, namely, distributive justice, which effects an order of balanced proportions between creature and creature in their respective reference to the superior good.<sup>88</sup> Commutative justice, regulating as it does social relations between equals, involves in its concept a shadow of inferiority and imperfection which forbids its formal predication of God. God does not, nor could He, owe any creature a debt save what is self-imposed by divine wisdom in view of the particular degree of glory He wishes to be reflected from the order of the universe.<sup>89</sup> This degree of glory and this order once decreed, God owes it to Himself as bountiful distributor of all goods to effect a proportional equality among His creatures so as to compass His original designs.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 30, a. 4.

<sup>86</sup> Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 21, a. 3: "Communicatio enim perfectionum, absolute considerata, pertinet ad bonitatem, (i.e. *ad amorem*, as can be seen from a. 1, ad 4 of this same question) . . . Inquantum vero perfectiones datae rebus a Deo, omnem defectum expellunt, pertinet ad misericordiam."

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, c. & ad 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 3.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*



This, however, is the proper function of distributive justice which, St. Thomas reminds us, is manifested in all of God's works, but never to the prejudice of divine mercy and the other formal attributes mentioned above. At the same time it must be remembered that there is not even a foundation for a distribution of favors to creatures according to the exigencies of justice unless it be that good pre-established in creatures according to a priority of nature, by divine mercy and the other operative attributes which forerun the designs of justice.<sup>91</sup> Hence distributive justice puts the final touches to the order found in the universe, and with it St. Thomas closes his discussion of the absolute attributes of God which may be proposed as formal exemplars of order.

The order of the universe, therefore, in its constitution and conservation depends upon the four operative attributes which we have just sketched from St. Thomas's fuller treatment of this same matter. St. Thomas later on will give a treatise on the divine power,<sup>92</sup> but this he considers to be on the side of divine execution rather than on the side of exemplar causality;<sup>93</sup> for here especially God's activity bearing upon creatures, always formally immanent, assumes an aspect under which it is referred to as virtually transient.<sup>94</sup> Liberality also is mentioned more rarely by St. Thomas as belonging to God; but the Thomists prefer to think of this virtue in terms of divine mercy or as easily reducible to mercy and consequently as following the fortunes of that virtue.<sup>95</sup> The present phase of our analysis, therefore, will be complete if we can establish unmistakable traces of divine wisdom, charity, mercy, and justice in the work of our redemption.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 25.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 4: "... potentia non ponitur in Deo ut aliquid differens a scientia et voluntate secundum rem, sed solum secundum rationem; inquantum scilicet potentia importat rationem principii *exequentis* id quod voluntas inperat." Cf. also John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theologicus*, Vol. I, Isagoge, p. 153 (Solesmes Edition).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* Also John of St. Thomas commenting on this article.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. John of St. Thomas, *ibid.*, Isagoge, p. 152.

All that St. Thomas ever had to say about the economy of our redemption can be summed up in the following principle: According to the divine wisdom, love, mercy, and justice the Son of God assumed a perfect human nature, underwent the Passion, and laid down His life to satisfy for and to redeem fallen man. St. Thomas thinks God could never permit such an evil as that of sin, were it not for the possibilities of His drawing from it a greater good, namely, the Incarnation.<sup>96</sup> From man's point of view, therefore, and in the order of execution, the objective motive for the Incarnation, as a matter of fact and according to the present order of providence, is none other than the redemption of mankind.<sup>97</sup> On God's side, however, the subjective motives for the marvelous order of reparation are divine wisdom, love, mercy, and justice.<sup>98</sup> The principle just enunciated implicitly contains every statement defended, every conclusion deduced, every corollary set down by the Thomists concerning Christ. It is the touchstone and gist of the whole divine economy of God to fallen nature; it regulates all that Thomists think or say about the redemption; it decides ultimately all problems about the "Word made flesh," about what He said or did while dwelling among us as visible image of the Father. The motives of wisdom, love, mercy, and justice dictated the sublime policy of an Immaculate Virgin Mother and of a miraculous conception under the influence of the Holy Ghost. Christ's wondrous prerogative of beatific vision perpetually enjoyed in His human intellect, His infused and experimental knowledge, His plenitude of divine grace, His *quasi* infinite power are all resolvable to His office as Mediator or High Priest and this in turn to the four motives already so frequently mentioned. Christ's human will and whole human existence here on earth gave unquestionable evidence of an

<sup>96</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3: "Deus enim permittit mala fieri, ut inde aliquid melius eliciat. Unde dicitur ad Rom., v, 20: *Ubi abundavit delictum, superabundavit et gratia*. Unde et in benedictione cerei paschalis dicitur: *O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere redemptorem*."

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 21, a. 3; III, q. 1, a. 1, & ad 3; a. 2.

inflexible harmony with God's motives for the Incarnation. Nothing proves this fidelity of Christ's will and life to the aforesaid motives quite so convincingly as the Gospel narrative itself. St. Luke, the physician, notes with a suggestion of wonder that a man who had suffered such a loss of energy and blood could still cry out in a loud voice.<sup>99</sup> Still more significantly St. John observes how the Redeemer, conscious of His fulfillment of the law and prophets in His regard, deliberately, and with perfect dominion over the whole drama to the very last, finally bows His head and dies.<sup>100</sup> In death more than ever before the aspects of a divinely wise, loving, merciful, and just retribution leave their traces deeply impressed upon the sacred humanity of Christ as over against diabolical intrigue and the spiteful, merciless, and unjust passions of men. St. Thomas and his disciples, taking full account of all these things, have rightfully insisted upon wisdom, charity, mercy, and justice as the divine motives and exemplars on God's part for the entire order of our redemption.

It will be noted finally that throughout the present step of our analysis special emphasis has been persistently laid upon the term *formal exemplar*. This implies no intention of belittling the role of efficient and final causality played by the divine attributes under discussion. St. Thomas would be one of the very last to dream of such a caricature of the divine architect.<sup>101</sup> But our problem has pointed all along in the direction of extrinsic formal causes or exemplars of order in the economy of our redemption and in the universe as a whole, because the essential relationship between image and prototype makes a last stand upon this species of causality. Moreover, St. Thomas himself gives us full sanction for just such a shading of emphasis when he declares categorically that the divine virtues are exemplars of our virtues, some of which pertain properly or formally to the divine nature and others only by reflection in the divine wisdom.<sup>102</sup> We have found wisdom,

<sup>99</sup> *Luke*, xxiii, 46.

<sup>100</sup> *John*, xix, 28-30.

<sup>101</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 6, a. 4.

<sup>102</sup> *I Contr. Gent.*, c. 93.

charity, mercy, and justice existing formally in God as exemplars of the order resulting from His activity in this world. Divine wisdom, charity, mercy, and justice, therefore, are bound by the law of causality to stand out as essential details in any reliable pattern from which man as image of God can and must on the plane of activity copy the ingredients indispensable for order and peace among men.

There remains just one point to be made. It is to indicate briefly but more particularly how St. Thomas conceives of peace as the normal result of man's activity fashioned upon the exemplars which we have just proposed.

### III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE DIVINE EXEMPLAR UPON DIVINE LIKENESS

The redeeming grace of Christ, we pointed out above, heals radically the wounds of fallen nature by endowing the soul with a Godlike mode of being and its faculties with similar principles of operation. The intellect of man is the first faculty to be reinstated in a divine viewpoint of things by the supernatural virtue of faith.<sup>103</sup> Without the light of faith the mind gropes about the blind alleys of reality unable to detect its ultimate principle of order and unity with a sufficient measure of accuracy and certitude. It sees and judges all things in terms of nature or principles immersed in and drawn from sensible, materialistic sources. Thus unappreciative of the order of things as they flow from God, their First Cause, it cannot escape the cosmo-centric point of view which ignores much of reality as a welter of meaningless detail and begets a mental synthesis entirely out of touch with, or even contradictory to, divine wisdom. Divinely infused faith, on the other hand, makes the mind theo-centric, that is, anchored to God, the author of the supernatural, as to first principle and ultimate end of its speculations and practical ordinations bearing upon action. This is the only way open to man here upon earth of imitating the divine wisdom in his mental synthesis of reality

<sup>103</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 7; q. 10, a. 3.



or in his practical dominion over its richer fruits as befits the creature claiming the dignity of human personality. The wayfarer, therefore, makes his nearest approach to divine wisdom or to God's viewpoint of things through the acceptance and direction of supernatural faith.

The will of fallen man also must be reorientated and co-ordinated to the higher exigencies of reality by the cumulative influence of charity, mercy, and justice. Mental culture alone, in which modern programs of education vainly hope to find a remedy for all of man's defects, will only engender proud Stoics intolerably enamored of their doctrine of self-sufficiency. If, on the other hand, the affective side of our nature is allowed to usurp the throne of faith and reason, then man quickly degenerates to the law of tooth and claw or becomes a pithy reed rooted in the lower swamps of animality to be shaken by the winds of every passion. There are, therefore, two main dependabilities about reality which reason enlightened by faith cannot possibly ignore: they are God and society. Unless man recognizes his dependence upon these his will becomes ego-centric, atomistic in tendency and out of harmony with the prerequisites of order and peace. Charity alone can re-address man's will securely to its true ultimate end, which is the sole principle of unity capable of re-grouping all of his vitalities under the banner of peace.<sup>104</sup> Mercy, the first-born of charity and her dutiful handmaid, will also be indispensable for peaceful concourse with our neighbor, since the doctrine of sufficiency<sup>105</sup> by which mercy is guided will always be presupposed

<sup>104</sup> In view of the principles which we have discussed it is easy to understand why St. Thomas places his *ex professo* treatise on peace in the very heart of the tract on charity (q. 29, especially a. 3), immediately after the principal, interior act of that virtue and even before his discussion of the virtue of mercy (q. 30). Peace will follow from the virtue of charity on the plane of action (just as joy necessarily follows from the beatific vision), even if we had no neighbor as material for the virtue of mercy. But granted that man is social and must to some extent live among men, then mercy enters into the very fabric of peace.

<sup>105</sup> St. Thomas does not conceive of the doctrine of sufficiency as a one-sided affair in the manner of many moderns. It involves both rich and poor: the poor in so far as it demands provision for their needs; the rich in so far as it commands

in any peace pact among men worthy of the name. Distributive justice, found principally in rulers, framers of treaties, or custodians of the commonweal and secondarily in the people under the aspect of a volitional readiness to accept and abide by truly just distributions, will finally set the stage of social living for a program of activity whose normal results can be none other than order and peace among men. But the insights of philosophy alone, which are limited to the ethical order of commutative and vindictive justice, cannot put the human will in contact with those influences of charity, mercy, and distributive justice which are conditions absolutely indispensable for peace on earth and glory to God in the highest.<sup>106</sup> A truly good will depends upon the light of revelation and the guidance of Christian theology. Unless the framers of treaties and the inaugurators of war are in contact with the aforesaid exemplars as vital motives, we cannot hope for a lasting peace on this earth, because these are the essential ingredients of peace among men.

In view of the principles which have been submitted to discussion throughout this paper, the reader will easily be able to draw many practical conclusions and damaging inferences concerning Capitalism, Communism, Naziism, and Fascism. It will be sufficient here to sum up the preceding argumentation in the following manner: Man is an image of God which reaches its fullest expression in Godlike activity from which alone results true peace among men. But the characteristic actions of God among men are wisdom, charity, mercy, and justice. Therefore these are the essential ingredients of peace.

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them to unburden themselves of their superfluities over and above their personal needs and what is required for the dignity of their state.

<sup>106</sup> This is the reason why St. Thomas relegates commutative justice to the status of a material prerequisite for peace and does not propose it as an essential exemplar of peace. He says: "... pax est opus justitiae indirecte, inquantum scilicet removet prohibens" (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 29, a. 3, ad 3).

## THE VIRTUE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL LIFE

By FRANCIS E. McMAHON



“THE distribution of goods among men and the division even of men into peoples and nations must not alter the common society of the human race.”<sup>1</sup> Bossuet spoke as a philosopher and as a theologian, deeply conscious of the essential oneness of human nature and of its common call to a supernatural destiny. He said this in a time characterized by a rapidly developing nationalism, and he was no doubt aware of the existence of great societies of peoples having little or no contact with the civilization of which he was a part. Yet these factors of division did not obscure for him the truth of the unity of mankind.

We of this century, and especially of the present decade, require little or no persuasion to accept this truth. With the press carrying regularly articles about world-wide economic programs and possible world-wide applications of the “Four Freedoms,” there is rather a tendency to deny cultural disparities, and a temptation to engage in the practice of day-dreaming about the quick realization of Utopia for all mankind after the present war. At the same time we are in a less advantageous position in certain respects than the thinkers of Bossuet’s time. We have for the most part abandoned the unity of philosophical vision they possessed, however imperfectly, as we have discarded to a great extent their deep faith in Christian teaching. The conviction as to the unity of mankind is today forced upon us more by material circumstances than by metaphysical or religious principles. I do not mean that the latter, however, have not played a part.

Cardinal Verdier was struck by the small attention given to the bonds uniting men across national frontiers in the social

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet, *Politique Tirée de l’Ecriture Sainte*, lib. I, art. 5.

sphere. It is surely strange that philosophers, for example, have rarely talked about social justice in relation to the "common society of the human race." It is a fact that in the past social justice has been almost exclusively considered in relation to the particular political or social unit. It has been assumed or stated that the individual had duties in social justice to his particular society, but that duties in charity alone existed in relation to the whole human race. Nations, as moral persons, were supposed, it is true, to be subjected to both classes of duties, but the nature of the justice in question was generally left unspecified. Commonly it seemed to mean commutative justice alone.

Has not the time arrived to review this position? Why should social justice be restricted to the particular state? What reasons militate against the proposition that peoples as well as nations have obligations in social justice to all mankind? What positive proofs can be offered in support of this proposition? The following constitutes the beginning of some reflections upon these and cognate questions. I do not profess to know the answers to all the questions connected with this problem. But I believe it to be a very legitimate problem, and the type of problem with which philosophers at the present time should be concerned.

There is no need of discussing *in extenso* the nature of social justice in these pages.<sup>2</sup> It is the moral virtue which ordains men's actions to the *common good*. It is distinguished thereby from commutative justice, which regulates actions between private individuals; and from distributive justice, which regulates actions between the social whole and the private citizen or group. Social justice resides both in the ruler and the ruled: in the ruler radically as in its source; in the ruled formally, as in those acting for the common good in accordance with law. The common good of course is specifically distinct from the sum of the individual goods or the good of the greatest majority of the citizens. It is the good of the whole

<sup>2</sup> Vd. Philip Hyland, O.P., "The Field of Social Justice," *THE THOMIST*, Vol. I, pp. 295-330.



social body in proper balance with the good of each part of that body.

"There exists for all the States together a common international good to be promoted and served, just as there exists for citizens and governors within each of these (States) a common good more near and less extended to be promoted and served."<sup>3</sup> No one can reasonably question this proposition of the now reigning Pontiff. One might argue perhaps that in a world where societies of men exist, having absolutely no contact with one another, an *actual* common good of a temporal character does not exist. It might be difficult to establish upon the basis merely of the specific unity of human nature the existence of any save a *potential* common good. But postulate that these societies are in communication with one another, postulate also that they are interdependent, and it would seem to follow with demonstrative force that they participate in one common good.

Men desire not merely to live, but to live well. It is this natural inclination which gives rise to the state, for the perfect temporal development of the human personality demands the cooperation of men in a common undertaking to provide for the good of all and of each. Interdependence in the satisfaction of the material needs and of the cultural aspirations of men is responsible for the emergence of a common good.

But one cannot logically today affirm the existence of a common good for each of the states and deny its existence for the whole of humanity. The facts and principles which demand it in the one case likewise demand it in the other. Dr. Wright has very properly said that "the same social exigencies which elicited the moral ties by which the national community was constituted, demand on the same principle and with the same validity the recognition of the subordination of the national community to the wider world society embracing individuals and nations alike."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State, in a letter to members of the Semaine Sociale de France (Lille session). Quoted in *National Patriotism in Papal Teaching*, by Rev. John J. Wright, Boston, 1942, p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

It is almost superfluous to dwell upon the facts of the interdependence of the peoples of the world today. The world wars of the present century are in large part the result of ignoring this interdependence, while attempting vainly to pursue a policy of selfish and unbridled nationalism. Peoples may try to revert to the spirit and practices of tribal nationalism today, but they cannot sever the links, forged in a thousand ways, that bind them one to another in the modern world. Hayes and Moon summed up the matter when they declared:

The horizon of the civilized world is no longer limited to a single continent, but includes the entire globe. As a result of exploration, of travel, of oceanic steamships and world commerce, of world politics, and of the intermingling of races by migration, our mental outlook has become incomparably broader. Moreover, we have built up an economic structure that is world-wide, with the result that each continent is dependent upon the others for everyday articles of food and commerce. No nation, no continent, can now shut itself off from the rest of the world as in bygone days.<sup>5</sup>

But if there is a common good transcending national lines, there certainly exist obligations towards that common good. The part must subserve the whole, precisely because it is a part. What are these obligations of the temporal order save those of social justice? This is the virtue specifically of the common good, the virtue that gathers up and gives direction to the acts of the other virtues, pointing them towards the good of the whole as such. Social justice pertains to the international order.

If the previous reflections are well-founded, it seems inevitable that the common good proper to humanity as a whole is superior in its nature and in its claims to the common good of a particular state. But how express the relations existing between the greater and the lesser common good? It is rash, I believe, to regard the common good of a particular state as a mere *means* to the realization of the superior good. Such a view would be in conflict with the manifest character of the modern state. While the latter is not an autonomous entity

<sup>5</sup> Hayes and Moon, *Modern History*, p. 818.

in the cultural or economic spheres, it does nevertheless have an attenuated self-existence, in contrast at least with the social, economic, and political units within the state itself. The common good of a particular state must be regarded as an end, but an end *secundum quid*, whereas the common good of humanity must be regarded as an end *simpliciter*, recalling always that we are confining ourselves to the temporal order of things. It is in this fashion, I believe, that the claims of patriotism and of internationalism can be reconciled.

Each state as a moral person has obligations in social justice to the international common good. But these obligations also touch directly individuals apart from national divisions. Man is prior to the state; humanity precedes national distinctions.<sup>6</sup> While in practice the task of world reconstruction will be effected through the various national states, the value of stressing the obligations of the individual as such in relation to the universal common good should not be ignored; for the vigor and resolution with which states will fulfill their specific obligations will depend upon the vigor and resolution of their constituent members.

Social justice, we have declared, resides radically in the rulers, formally in the ruled. We have, however, the extraordinary anomaly in the modern world of an international community without adequate organs of expression and direction. Posterity may find nothing more astonishing than this. It will certainly find in this lack a partial explanation for twentieth-century warfare. The world has been long overripe for the juridical institutions essential for the right direction of nations and individuals towards attainment of the supreme temporal common good. So long as it sees fit to dispense with such institutions, so long will it continue to substitute material force of arms for moral right.

<sup>6</sup> "The emphasis in papal teaching appears . . . to warrant our concluding that the international community exists not so much as the aggregate of the national communities to which the individuals belong, but as a community enjoying its proper existence in transcendence of the relations to one another of the nations, and exacting its own claims directly on the individual simultaneously with and superior to the claims of the national community." Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

There is no obligation of social justice today more pressing than that of establishing some form of international organization by which disputes of nations can be settled peacefully, and by which the various problems of a social and economic character—now so largely international in scope—can be solved in the interest of all mankind. It has been recently suggested with much force that the specific act of social justice consists in the formation and reformation of institutions.<sup>7</sup> Such a view would give added force and clarity to the point. The alternative facing the world is either a world society or perpetual chaos.

The notion of social justice has been strait-jacketed long enough in our philosophy. Thomism, rightly understood, can make one's vision as large as the world. It can make one think in something more than parochial terms. If we leave to others the task of working out the basis for "the century of the common man everywhere," then we shall be unfaithful to the great tradition of which we are the heirs.

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<sup>7</sup> Rev. William Ferree, S. M., reviewing "The History and Meaning of the Term Social Justice" by Leo W. Shields. *New Scholasticism*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, April, 1942, pp. 188-190. Father Ferree's manuscript on this subject will shortly be published. Most writers hitherto have maintained that social justice has no special act which is not the act of another virtue.



# THE THEORY OF OLIGARCHY: EDMUND BURKE

By ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

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## I

IN *Scholasticism and Politics*<sup>1</sup> M. Maritain sets forth the reasons for his faith in universal suffrage: "Because it offers the people a recourse against political enslavement; perhaps particularly because of its value as a symbol; and because it attests, according to the specific law of democracy, the right of human persons to political life, and of the multitude to the constitution of the authoritative organism of the city,—it is because of all this that modern people are so strongly and so justly attached to it."

The great name in opposition to this faith is Burke. The interrogation of democracy, resulting from the temporary triumph of states dominated by a conviction of the political incompetence of the masses, makes it useful to consider Burke's position and the arguments he advanced to establish it.

The task of discovering what that position was is not altogether free from difficulty. No doubt Burke began his political career by urging that the weight and independence of British voters would be increased if their numbers were lessened.<sup>2</sup> But the next year he said that the House of Commons was in a distinct sense the representative of the people, not because its power was derived from them, but because the virtue and essence of it consisted in being the express image of the feeling of the nation.<sup>3</sup>

Morley<sup>4</sup> and MacCunn<sup>5</sup> say that these words are not to be

<sup>1</sup> P. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Observations on a Late State of the Nation*, 1769, Works II, (London, 1803) 135-36.

<sup>3</sup> *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, Works II, 217, 287-88, 342-43. See also *Plan of Economical Reform*, Speeches II, (London, 1816) 43.

<sup>4</sup> *Burke*, English Men of Letters Series, 165.

<sup>5</sup> *The Political Philosophy of Burke*, 26.

taken in any democratic sense. It may be so, though they are strong words. But neither of these writers mentions the fact that in his speeches on America Burke explicitly attacked the unreformed condition of Parliament. The lack of representation accorded Manchester and other considerable places then proved to him that the British government was only an approximation to the right; the inequalities of representation were one of the shameful parts of the British constitution, a weakness, an opprobrium, and "the slough of slavery, which we are not able to work off."<sup>6</sup> He commended the highly popular character of the American governments<sup>7</sup> and scoffed at the notion that the colonists should be persuaded that their liberty would be more secure if held in trust for them by the British as their guardians during a perpetual minority.<sup>8</sup>

At this time he ridiculed virtual representation, the doctrine according to which those elected by a few were assumed to represent all. Could an American seriously be expected to think his country a part of the manor of Greenwich?<sup>9</sup> Wales, Chester, and Durham had been granted real representation. "What! does the electric force of virtual representation more easily pass over the Atlantic, than pervade Wales, which lies in your neighbourhood: or than Chester and Durham, surrounded by abundance of representation that is actual and palpable? But, Sir, your ancestors thought this sort of virtual representation, however ample, to be totally insufficient for the freedom of the inhabitants of territories that are so near, and comparatively so inconsiderable. How then can I think it sufficient for those which are infinitely greater, and infinitely more remote?"<sup>10</sup>

Nor was virtual representation good enough for the Catholics in Ireland, not even late in Burke's life, when for many years

<sup>6</sup> *On American Taxation*, 1774, Speeches I, 178, 236.

<sup>7</sup> *On Conciliation with the Colonies*, 1775, Speeches I, 289.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 293.

<sup>9</sup> *On the Address on the Disturbances in North America*, 1775, Speeches I, 262. Cf. "It is material to us to be represented really and *bona fide*, and not in forms, in types, and shadows, and fictions of law." On Middlesex elections in *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, *supra*, note 3, 304-05.

<sup>10</sup> *On Conciliation with the Colonies*, *supra*, note 7, 314.

he had poured his scorn on those who sought to enlarge the franchise and reform the House of Commons. In the case of the Irish Catholics, instead of proposing to increase the weight of the voters by diminishing their number, he asks whether the best way to secure the building is to narrow its foundations. "The body of disfranchised men," he says, "will not be perfectly satisfied to remain always in that state; if they are not satisfied, you have two millions of subjects in your bosom, full of uneasiness . . . that you will not permit them to profit of the protection of a common father, or the freedom of common citizens. . . . This way of proscribing men by whole nations, as it were, from all the benefits of the constitution to which they were born, I never can believe to be politick or expedient, much less necessary for the existence of any state or church in the world."<sup>11</sup>

## II

It is impossible to reconcile these contradictions. We shall see later whether it is possible to explain them. There can be no doubt that Burke approved the extension of representation to Wales, Chester, Durham, and Ireland and would have approved it to America except for the difficulties of distance. In every other connection he opposed the slightest change in the suffrage or in the constitution of the House of Commons. And this he did in spite of the fact that the body of disfranchised men was far greater in England than in Ireland. The total electorate of England and Wales in 1780 was estimated at 214,000 out of a population of 8,000,000.<sup>12</sup> Of the two million people of Scotland, 2,643 were electors;<sup>13</sup> and they voted for forty-five members. It need scarcely be added, for it is notorious, that in Burke's day the majority of the House of Commons were in effect the appointees and the representatives of the Crown and the landed aristocracy rather than the electorate, limited as that electorate was.

<sup>11</sup> *A Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, M.P.*, 1792, Works VI, 331, 360.

<sup>12</sup> Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform*, (London, 1913) 2.

<sup>13</sup> Wilkie, *The Representation of Scotland*, (1895) 333. The number was only 4000 in 1831. Woodward, *The Age of Reform*, (Oxford, 1938) 24.

Nevertheless Burke held that virtual representation was better for the people than actual. Only in Ireland is disfranchisement a grievance; only in Middlesex is an *ens rationis* an unsatisfactory substitute for an actual choice. Virtual representation is equal representation, because "you have men equally interested in the prosperity of the whole, who are involved in the general interest and the general sympathy." It is the best of all representation, because those places which do elect representatives will be above the local passions of those which do not and will therefore "preserve the balance of the parts, and with a more general view, and a more steady hand, than the rest."<sup>14</sup>

Virtual representation is, of course, merely a theory. It is worse; it is a fiction, and a disingenuous one. Representation, if it means anything, means that the representative must be responsible to the represented. As Burke often says, representation is trusteeship, and it is the essence of trusteeship that the trustee shall be accountable to the beneficiary.<sup>15</sup> Since the virtually represented have no votes, they have no way of calling their virtual representatives to account except by revolution, which Burke would be the last to recommend. He offers them instead "the interposition of the body of the people,"<sup>16</sup> which sounds like universal suffrage or revolution, but which apparently means petitions, letters, and public meetings. Since Burke himself often tried these devices without producing the slightest impression on Parliament, and since he did not welcome them when used to advance causes of which he disapproved, such as Reform, it is hard to believe that he could have really regarded them as an adequate substitute for votes against derelict representatives.

The theory or fiction of virtual representation is one which we should expect to find especially repulsive to Burke, the avowed enemy of all theories and most fictions. *A Letter to*

<sup>14</sup> *On the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament*, 1784, Speeches III, 49-50.

<sup>15</sup> *On Mr. Fox's East India Bill*, 1783, Speeches II, 411.

<sup>16</sup> *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, *supra*, note 3, 324.



*the Sheriffs of Bristol*<sup>17</sup> states concisely the position he took in regard to Ireland, America, India, and many abuses at home. "If you ask me what a free government is, I answer that, for any practical purpose, it is what the people think so; and that they, and not I, are the natural, lawful, and competent judges of this matter." It is the feelings of the people and not theories of their rights which are the best guide for the policy of government.<sup>18</sup> The theory of virtual representation and the kind of virtual representation offered could, in Burke's day, have aroused no feelings but indifference and hostility.

Moreover, the doctrine proves too much. If a citizen does not need a vote to be well represented, why should any citizens have votes? If it would be bad for Manchester to send a member to Parliament, how can it be good for Bristol to send two? If virtual representation is the best representation, why should there be any actual representation? Why, in short, should the House of Commons exist? According to Burke, "The king is the representative of the people; so are the lords; so are the judges. They are all trustees for the people."<sup>19</sup> Virtual representation makes a case for eliminating actual representation. It even makes a case for absolute monarchy.<sup>20</sup> It makes none at all for Burke's position that the franchise and the House of Commons should be left alone.

### III

The doctrine of virtual representation might be tolerable if it provided for the government of the best in the interest of all. But here at once we are met by another fiction. Virtue and

<sup>17</sup> 1777, Works III, 183.

<sup>18</sup> *On Mr. Fox's Motion for the Repeal of Certain Penal Statutes Respecting Religious Opinions*, 1792, Speeches IV, 58.

<sup>19</sup> *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, loc. cit., supra, note 3.

<sup>20</sup> The implications of such a remark as this are somewhat startling: "He (Burke) laid it down as a maxim, that monarchy was the basis of all good government, and the nearer to monarchy any government approached, the more perfect it was, and vice versa. . . ." *On the Quebec Government Bill*, 1791, Speeches IV, 20. Cf. "Kings are naturally lovers of low company." *On His Plan of Economical Reform*, 1780, supra, note 3, 69.

wisdom are, says Burke, the only qualifications for government; but they are of two kinds, actual and presumptive. Those who have land, leisure, and information, and especially land, are presumed to be virtuous and wise, and apparently the presumption is irrebuttable. "A true natural aristocracy . . . is formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions, which, taken as generalities, must be admitted for actual truths. . . ." <sup>21</sup> Though actual virtue and wisdom doubtless exist among those without land, leisure, and information, care must be taken that they are not too lightly admitted to association with presumed wisdom and virtue. "I do not hesitate to say, that the road to eminence and power, from obscure condition, ought not to be made too easy, nor a thing too much of course. If rare merit be the rarest of all rare things, it ought to pass through some sort of probation." <sup>22</sup> The great and rich are required to display no merit except that they are great and rich, and need pass through no probation.

To Burke the ownership of land, and the more land the better, was the clearest indication of virtue and wisdom. Property, by which he almost always means landed property, <sup>23</sup> is the basis of religion, morality, and law; and the moment that equality and the sovereignty of the people are adopted as a rule of government, property, and with it religion, morality, and law, will be at an end. <sup>24</sup> Any government that protects property is a good government. "Let it be a pure monarchy, a democracy, or an aristocracy, or all mixed, he (Burke) cared not, provided a government did exist, the first principle of which must necessarily be security to property, because for the protection of property, all governments were instituted. First, therefore, restore property, and afterwards let that property find a government for itself. . . . If the formation of government was committed to the no-property people the first thing they would do, obviously would be to plunder and massacre each other.

<sup>21</sup> *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, 1791, Works VI, 217.

<sup>22</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, Works V, 106.

<sup>23</sup> A much narrower meaning than that given by Locke, *Second Essay of Civil Government*, sec. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *On Mr. Sheridan's Motion Relative to the Existence of Seditious Practices*, 1793, Speeches IV, 126.

After all, if it were asked, did he prefer property to virtue? his answer would be no. To honour?—No. To morals?—No. To arts and literature?—No. But he respected property in as much as it was the basis upon which they were all erected, the soul that animated, the genius that protected them.”<sup>25</sup> The worst abuses are justified in the name of property. The game laws look odious, but one consideration that causes reflecting men to consent to their being adhered to and enforced is the liking of their country which they create in gentlemen’s minds.<sup>26</sup> It is a sufficient defense of the rotten-borough system that those who oppose it are trying to defeat the operation of property in elections.<sup>27</sup> And finally we rise to the flat statement that the property of the nation is the nation.<sup>28</sup>

Ability must be represented in the state, but as property is sluggish, inert, and timid,<sup>29</sup> it must be out of all proportion predominant in order to be safe from ability; and the greater the accumulation, the greater should be the predominance, because the greater the temptation to the envy and rapacity of ability.<sup>30</sup> Actual virtue and wisdom, then, are rather to be

<sup>25</sup> *On the Bill to Enable Subjects of France to Enlist as Soldiers*, etc., 1793, Speeches, IV, 166. In the *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, M. P.*, 1792, *supra*, note 11, 371, we learn that in Ireland something is due the multitude as men, and besides that, as collective, though not individual, holders of great property. They must have protection, security, even consideration; but they must not predominate.

<sup>26</sup> *On the Athol Claim*, 1790, Speeches III, 490.

<sup>27</sup> *Observations on the Conduct of the Minority*, 1793, Works VII, 274.

<sup>28</sup> *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 1796, Works VIII, 190. Cf. “The revenue of the state is the state.” *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 21, 403. Cf. Calvin Coolidge: “The business of this country is business.”

<sup>29</sup> This was too much for Gladstone. See Morley’s *Life*, III, 469.

<sup>30</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 106. See also *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, *supra*, note 28, 170: “Jacobinism is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property.” Cf. *On Mr. Grenville’s Bill for Regulating the Trials of Controverted Elections*, 1770, Speeches I, 38-40, “He (Burke) then shewed, that parliament was not meant to be a representation of the landed property only, but of the commercial interest chiefly, as appeared from the establishment of the boroughs. . . . He then compared the benefit derived to society from the unactuated load of landed abilities, which descended from generation to generation, in the useless members of the community, and that which derived from the acquirements, improvements, and activity of mental abilities, and shewed that either might be pernicious, and yet that both were of real benefit wherever and whenever they mixed, but always more so when acting in mutual aid of each other.”

feared than encouraged. As qualifications for government they cannot compare with the fictitious merit which inevitably attaches to the ownership of land.

#### IV

Burke often proclaims that government is for the common good, but this is a fiction, too. "The object of the state is (as far as may be) the happiness of the whole."<sup>31</sup> "Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human *wants*. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom."<sup>32</sup> "He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection—He willed therefore the state. . . ."<sup>33</sup> But there is some doubt whether the poor and middling ranks of the people belong to the community at all. In *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies*,<sup>34</sup> Burke says that the landed proprietors of France number about seventy thousand and adds, "I am sure that if half that number of the same description were taken out of this country, it would leave hardly any thing that I should call the people of England." In the *Letters on a Regicide Peace*,<sup>35</sup> he makes a more elaborate calculation with the same spiritual, though not numerical, result. "I have often endeavoured," he says, "to compute and to class those who, in any political view are to be called the people. . . . In England and Scotland, I compute that those of adult age, not declining in life, of tolerable leisure for such discussions, and of some means of information, and who are above menial dependence, (or what virtually is such) may amount to about four hundred thousand." This is the British people. They have land, leisure, and information; but only a little more than half of them had the vote. Burke will not give the franchise even to those who seem clearly entitled to it on his own principles.

What of those who are not within the magic circle of the thirty-five or four hundred thousand? They should be taught

<sup>31</sup> *On Mr. Fox's Motion for the Repeal of Certain Penal Statutes Respecting Religious Opinions*, loc. cit., supra, note 18.

<sup>32</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, supra, note 22, 122-23.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 186.

<sup>34</sup> 1793, Works VII, 140-41.

<sup>35</sup> *Supra*, note 28, 140.



that happiness may be found in virtue; that the condition of the great and rich is more splendid, but not more happy; that thoughts of political equality can only embitter the real inequality which can never be removed; and that there is a future life in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when they will be equal by nature and may be more than equal by virtue.<sup>36</sup> "The body of the people must not find the principles of natural subordination by art rooted out of their minds. They must respect that property of which they cannot partake. They must labour to obtain what by labour can be obtained; and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportioned to the endeavour, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportions of eternal justice."<sup>37</sup> "There is in nature and reason a principle which, for their own benefit, postpones, not the interest but the judgment, of those who are *numero plures*, to those who are *virtute et honore majores*."<sup>38</sup>

If political equality is not in the interest of the multitude, what is their interest? It is difficult to see what wants of the people Burke would allow government to gratify, or how it was to assist in the perfection of the virtue and nature of common men. The state is not to play any role in improving the economic condition of the poor. Though Brougham<sup>39</sup> and Morley<sup>40</sup> thought highly of Burke's economic views, and Adam Smith is alleged to have congratulated him upon them,<sup>41</sup> they are inconsistent<sup>42</sup> and, where they are clear, represent the most heartless extreme of *laissez faire*.

Those who are ground under the great wheel of circulation

<sup>36</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 84, 187.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 432.

<sup>38</sup> *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, *supra*, note 21, 216.

<sup>39</sup> *Historical Sketches of Statesmen*, (London, 1839) I, 167.

<sup>40</sup> *Op. cit.*, *supra*, note 4, 202, Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 387-388.

<sup>41</sup> Cobban, *Edmund Burke*, 193.

<sup>42</sup> Burke both opposed and favored restrictions on Irish trade. His speech against Pitt's commercial treaty with France is absurd in itself and contradictory to almost all his other expressions on international trade. Except for the speech on the Address in 1767, Speeches I, 10, he never suggested that the state had any responsibility to improve the lot of the poor. As early as 1772 Burke said on the *Bill To Regulate the Importation and Exportation of Corn*, Speeches I, 125-26, "Sir, I am no enemy to the poor. On the contrary, I sympathize with their distresses. On this

are necessary sacrifices to the general good.<sup>43</sup> The state can do nothing about those "innumerable servile, degrading, unseemly, unmanly, and often most unwholesome and pestiferous occupations, to which by the social economy so many wretches are inevitably doomed."<sup>44</sup> Nature, or God, regulates the great wheel of circulation.<sup>45</sup> Labor is a commodity like any other, and rises and falls with the demand. This is in the nature of things. The interest of the employer and the worker are always the same, and it is absolutely impossible that their contracts can be onerous to either party. The worker must earn a profit for the employer so that the employer may keep the "instrument he employs" in good working order. The more avaricious the employer is, the better the worker should like it, for the better the care the employer will take of him. Burke's workers are hardly distinguishable from slaves.

If the necessity of the seller of labor exceeds the necessity of the buyer, even to the extent that the seller cannot subsist on

occasion I give way to the present bill, not because I approve of the measure in itself, but because I think it prudent to yield to the spirit of the times. The people will have it so, and it is not for their representatives to say nay." This from the independent representative who will not sacrifice the people's interest to their will! "I cannot, however, help entering my protest against the general principles of policy on which it is supported, because I think them extremely dangerous. . . . I would have the people of this island know, that if they would be relieved, they must relieve themselves by an increase of industry. There is no other possible remedy. People may talk of charity and parliamentary aid, but I am afraid these will in the end prove ineffectual. . . . Let us rather inculcate this maxim, that they must work out their salvation with their own hand."

<sup>43</sup> That Burke made his usual exception in favor of Ireland is suggested by *Two Letters to Gentlemen in Bristol*, 1778, Works III, 224: "The author of our nature has written it strongly in that nature . . . that man shall eat his bread by his labour; and I am persuaded, that no man, and no combination of men, for their own ideas of their particular profit, can, without great impiety, undertake to say, that he *shall not* do so; that they have no sort of right, either to prevent the labour, or to withhold the bread." Burke's description of the dreadful poverty he saw in Ireland in his youth is given in Samuels, *The Early Life Correspondence and Writings of Edmund Burke*, (Cambridge, 1923) 172.

<sup>44</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 291-92.

<sup>45</sup> *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, 1795, Works VII, 376, 404; *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, *supra*, note 28, 368-69. Woodrow Wilson said of the former work, "every line . . . spoke the hopeful, the informed, the philosophical economist." Edmund Burke and the French Revolution, *The Century Magazine*, 1901, LXII, 784, 785.

what the buyer will pay, the remorseless and immutable laws of economics and political science tell us that there is nothing that economics or political science can do for him. Such a man has no claims according to the rules of commerce and the principles of justice. "He passes out of that department, and comes within the jurisdiction of mercy. In that province the magistrate has nothing to do." If the magistrate does interfere in the dispensation of charity, he is violating that property which it is his office to protect. "Without all doubt charity to the poor is a direct and obligatory duty upon all Christians, next in order after the payment of debts, full as strong, and by nature made infinitely more delightful to us. . . . But the manner, mode, time, choice of objects, and proportion, are left to private discretion. . . ." <sup>46</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that government can do nothing for the economic condition of the common man. "Numbers in their nature imply poverty." <sup>47</sup> If the autonomous economic system reduces a man to starvation, he must starve, unless charity, which is wholly a private matter, relieves him. The state does its full duty if it refrains from interfering *against* him. It has no positive obligations to him.

Nor has it any positive obligations, aside from the maintenance of an established church, to his moral, intellectual, or spiritual life. The state will preserve order; it will prevent men from breaking the law. But when God willed the state to perfect our nature and our virtue, he apparently intended it to accomplish this aim without doing anything about our education, our leisure, or our minds. No political thinker of similar reputation has ever had so little to say about education as Burke. We learn that in Ireland, at least, the prohibition of the means of improving our rational nature is the worst species of tyranny that the insolence and perseverance of mankind

<sup>46</sup> *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, *supra*, note 45, 380-91. Apparently Burke would not even favor poor relief, upon which £2,000,000 of public money was spent in 1785. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, (2nd Ed. New York, 1927) 448.

<sup>47</sup> *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, *supra*, note 45, 376.

ever dared to exercise.<sup>48</sup> We discover that French education is bad because it includes vice, namely, the study of the bold experimenters in morality,<sup>49</sup> and because this education, founded in a knowledge of the physical wants of men and carried to an identification of enlightened self-interest with the public interest, is offered as a substitute for religion.<sup>50</sup> But Burke cares no more for the education of the people than he does for supplying them with leisure or rescuing them from poverty. When he thinks of education, he thinks of "our young nobility and gentlemen" on the Grand Tour.<sup>51</sup>

## V

If, as Burke reminds us on the authority of Ecclesiasticus, wisdom comes only with leisure, why did he not suggest the possibility of increasing the leisure of the masses so that they could get wisdom? If a well-informed man can see that a man who has no property has as much interest in the constitution and good order of society as a man who has much,<sup>52</sup> why not obviate the dangers of the ill-informed man's ignorance by trying to see to it that he is well-informed? Why should Burke insist that these particular people and their children must always be poor, overworked, and ignorant, while the privileged classes and their descendants, however worthless, must remain forever privileged? Why should the only want which the unprivileged have a right to have provided by the wisdom of government be the want of a restraint on their passions? The explanation offered is another group of fictions: prescription, presumption, and convention. They are Burke's answer to the Rights of Man.

<sup>48</sup> *A Letter to a Peer of Ireland on the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics*, 1782, Works VI, 282.

<sup>49</sup> *A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, 1791, Works VI, 29.

<sup>50</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 270-71.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 189. See also, *Mr. Burke's Table Talk*, Crewe, *Miscellanies of Philobiblician Society* (London, 1862-'3), sec. 15. Jennings estimates that at this time not more than one in twenty of the working classes could read. *A History of the Economic and Social Progress of European Peoples*, (1936) 229.

<sup>52</sup> *On Mr. Sheridan's Motion Relative to the Existence of Seditious Practices*, *supra*, note 24, 126.



Prescription means that whatever is old confers a right, and nothing confers a right unless it is old. The sole authority of the constitution is that it has existed time out of mind. "The individual is foolish. The multitude, for the moment is foolish, when they act without deliberation; but the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species it almost always acts right."<sup>53</sup>

When, in the debate on the Navy Estimates in 1772, Lord North's government had ventured to plead prescription, Burke replied with the best answer to his own use of the same doctrine: "How weak an argument prescription is in this case, they do not seem to feel; for, where interest is concerned, what will not men think an argument? *Stare super vias antiquas* is their political creed. What then! is this maxim to preclude every improvement, however obvious and necessary, in the constitution? The first enquiry, before we proceed to walk upon this old road is, whether we can be said *star bene*, and the next is whether, if this be the case, we cannot *star meglio*. If the latter part of the alternative is beyond our reach, then *sto qui* becomes a necessary, as well as a prudential conclusion."<sup>54</sup>

Prescription is the most disingenuous of all Burke's arguments for opposing the extension of the suffrage and the reform of the House of Commons. He knew that in 1430 great numbers of the people had been disfranchised. If antiquity is to be our guide, why not revert to the status of 1429? He knew that the representation had been frequently altered. Between the reigns of Henry VIII and Charles II, 130 members had been added by royal charters. Scotland got 45 members in 1707. And we have seen that he cordially approved the extension of representation to Wales, Chester, and Durham. What Wales, Chester,

<sup>53</sup> *On the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament, supra*, note 14, 46-47. Cf. *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, supra*, note 21, "In their political arrangements, men have no right to put the well-being of the present generation wholly out of the question. Perhaps the only moral trust with any certainty in our hands is the care of our own times." The strongest and clearest statement on prescription is found in the *Letter to Captain Mercer*, 1790, Corres. (Fitzwilliam Ed. London, 1844) III, 141.

<sup>54</sup> *Speeches I*, 140.

and Durham had to have in spite of prescription, Manchester cannot have because of it.

The truth is that prescription is not an argument; it is a practice, and one that is indispensable in quieting titles to real estate. But if there is a right that government shall in its wisdom provide for human wants, the title to this provision can never be quieted by long neglect or abuse. "There is a time, when men will not suffer bad things because their ancestors have suffered worse."<sup>55</sup> When a man acquires title to land by prescription, he does indeed deprive others of the ownership of that particular property; but he does not prevent them from owning land at all. To say that because a few have for a long time held a monopoly of participation in government they can bar others from participation in it is to beg the important questions, among them the questions of the nature of man and the purpose of the state. Nor does it follow that because one man has a vote he may claim the prescriptive right to prevent me from having one, too. If I have one I leave his prescriptive title to his own intact.

Presumption means that no matter how many times or in how many ways a nation shows that it dislikes certain existing political arrangements, nevertheless, if those arrangements exist, the nation will be presumed to have chosen them and will be presumed to wish to retain them. The fact of the existence of these arrangements raises a presumption which is ten thousand times better than an actual choice, for an actual choice is likely to be tumultuary and giddy.<sup>56</sup> It is perhaps unnecessary to say anything more about this fiction than that it is completely fictitious and not eminently consolatory to a body of men full of uneasiness because they are disfranchised.

Convention does not mean agreement; Burke has little use for the social contract. Convention means convenience. "The moment you abate anything from the full rights of men, each to govern himself, and suffer any artificial positive limitation upon those rights, from that moment the whole organization

<sup>55</sup> *On His Plan of Economical Reform*, *supra*, note 20, 22.

<sup>56</sup> *On the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament*, *loc. cit.*, *supra*, note 53.

of government becomes a consideration of convenience."<sup>57</sup> And this is the man who in 1777 had said, "All the ancient, honest juridical principles and institutions of England . . . were invented for this one good purpose; that what was not just should not be convenient."<sup>58</sup>

To the questions whose convenience is to be consulted and what is inconvenient, Burke replies that those who benefit by the established order are those whose convenience is at stake, and that since any change would alter the established order and the privileges of those who benefit by it, any change is inconvenient. "I know there is an order, that keeps things fast in their place; it is made to us, and we are made to it. Why not ask another wife, another body, another mind?"<sup>59</sup>

With prescription, presumption, and convention Burke beats down talk of principles,<sup>60</sup> popular sovereignty,<sup>61</sup> and human rights.<sup>62</sup> He who opposed the slave trade, a prescriptive branch

<sup>57</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 123.

<sup>58</sup> *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, *supra*, note 17, 140.

<sup>59</sup> *On the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament*, *supra*, note 14, 51. Cf. "Our country is not a thing of mere physical locality. It consists, in a great measure, in the ancient order into which we were born." *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, *supra*, note 21, 207. "We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle on which nature teaches us to reverence individual men; on account of their age; and on account of those from whom they are descended." *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 80-81. It will be noted that nature does not teach us to reverence either men or institutions on account of their justice.

<sup>60</sup> "To ask whether a thing, which has always been the same, stands to its usual principle, seems to me perfectly absurd; for how do you know the principles but from the construction?" *On the Reform of the Representation of the Commons in Parliament*, *supra*, note 14, 48.

<sup>61</sup> "In talking of the English nation, they talked of the sovereignty of the people: the constitution of this country knew no such sovereignty; the king was sovereign of the Lords and of the Commons; the King, Lords, and Commons, were the representatives of the country at home; the king was its only representative abroad. They talked of the nation: we knew of no nation as a distinct body from the representative powers. We talked indeed of the people, but the sovereignty of the people was a phrase not recognized by law, and inconsistent with our constitution." *On the Alien Bill*, 1792, Speeches IV, 93. "The sovereignty of the people was the most false, wicked, and mischievous doctrine that ever could be preached to them." *On Mr. Sheridan's Motion Relative to the Existence of Seditious Practices*, *supra*, note 24, 126.

<sup>62</sup> "In the famous law of the 3d of Charles I called the Petition of Right, the parliament says to the king, 'Your subjects have inherited this freedom,' claiming

of commerce if there ever was one, on the basis of natural right, "abstracted from all political, personal, and local considerations,"<sup>63</sup> who said of India that the rights of mankind are not to be made subservient to the practice of government,<sup>64</sup> and who observed that the Irish Catholics suffered from a "deprivation of all the rights of human nature,"<sup>65</sup> held that the addition of sixteen members would be the death and burial of the constitution<sup>66</sup> and referred to the movement for reform as "wild and savage insurrection."<sup>67</sup>

## VI

The state, then, though willed by God to perfect our nature and our virtue, comes to play the purely negative role of preserving the *status quo*. "The state ought to confine itself to what regards the state, or the creatures of the state, namely, the exterior establishment of its religion; its magistracy; its revenue; its military force by sea and land; the corporations that owe their existence to its fiat; in a word, to everything that is *truly and properly publick*, to the publick peace, to the publick safety, to the publick order, to the publick prosperity."<sup>68</sup> We have already seen that the way in which the state is to promote the public prosperity is to leave it alone. "Let government protect and encourage industry, secure property, repress violence, and discountenance fraud, it is all they have to do. In other respects, the less they meddle in these affairs the better; the rest is in the hands of our Master and theirs."<sup>69</sup>

their franchises not on abstract principles 'as rights of men,' but as the rights of Englishmen. . . ." *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 76.

<sup>63</sup> *On the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, Speeches III, 343.

<sup>64</sup> *Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, 1788, Speeches IV, 357. See also *On Mr. Fox's East India Bill*, *supra*, note 15, 409.

<sup>65</sup> *A Letter to a Peer of Ireland on the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics*, *loc. cit.*, *supra*, note 48.

<sup>66</sup> *On the Address on the King's Speech*, 1785, Speeches III, 89.

<sup>67</sup> *A Letter to a Noble Lord*, 1796, Works VIII, 13. Cf. *A Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, *supra*, note 17: "But it ought to be the constant aim of every wise publick counsel to find out by cautious experiments, and rational, cool endeavours, with how little, not how much of this restraint, the community can subsist. For liberty is a good to be improved, and not an evil to be lessened."

<sup>68</sup> *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, *supra*, note 45, 416.

<sup>69</sup> *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, *supra*, note 28, 367.



It is obviously impossible to defend by reason the proposition that the *status quo* is perfect simply because it is the *status quo*; and Burke gave up trying. He appealed from natural rights to natural feelings. "Why do I feel so differently from the Reverend Dr. Price, and those of his lay flock, who will choose to adopt the sentiments of his discourse?—for this plain reason—because it is *natural* I should. . . ." <sup>70</sup> "We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected. . . ." <sup>71</sup>

There is no arguing about feelings. In asserting that his feelings were right and Dr. Price's wrong Burke was committing the sin which he most often condemned, the sin of being a judge in one's own cause. Dr. Price could with justice reply that his feelings were as good as Burke's and that, whether they were or not, he felt like retaining them.

Burke's conclusion involves the abdication of reason. But a political thinker must think. Burke's failure must be ascribed in part to the difficulty inherent in constructing a defensible theory in support of an indefensible position <sup>72</sup> and in part to the diverse conditions under which he tried to defend it.

In his early days the great Whig families were fighting the King <sup>73</sup>; and Burke fought everything Lord North proposed,

<sup>70</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *supra*, note 22, 156.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 166. Cf. *Letter from Philip Francis*, 1790, Burke's corres., III, 168-69. "When thousands after thousands are dragooned out of their own country for the sake of their religion, or sent to row in the galleys for selling salt against law,—when the liberty of every individual is at the mercy of every prostitute, pimp, or parasite, that has access to the hand of power, or to any of its basest substitutes—my mind, I own, is not at once prepared to be satisfied with gentle palliatives for such disorders. Why? Because, as you say, it is not *natural* that it should."

<sup>72</sup> Adler and Farrell, *The Theory of Democracy*, Part IV, sec. 5, to appear in THE THOMIST VI, No. 1; and *ibid.*, Part V, sec. 1 and 2, to appear in THE THOMIST VI, No. 2.

<sup>73</sup> The Duke of Portland summed the matter up in 1794 by saying, "It will not be denied to me that the characteristic feature of the present Reign has been its uniform and almost unremitting attention and study to debase and vilify the natural Aristocracy of the country, and under the popular pretence of abolishing all party distinctions, to annihilate, if possible, the Whig Party." *Burke-Windham Correspondence*, (Gibson Ed., Cambridge, 1910) 97.

including his attempts to regulate the East India Company.<sup>74</sup> The American policy was the King's policy. Burke therefore fought, and fought brilliantly, against it. In the struggle he expressed ideas of the purposes of government and the participation of the people in it which, even if they are to be understood as applying solely to the 400,000 whom he later called the people, contradict the spirit and even the letter of his final views. This contradiction can only be explained by the fact that he was determined to protect the aristocracy from attack from any quarter. If it came from the King, he would use the people against him; if it came from the people, he would retort on them with the glories and virtues of the established order, and in so doing would forget or abandon the claims he had made for the people. When the issue was one in which the interests of the landed aristocracy were not involved, or where their interests happened to coincide with those of humanity, Burke exercised his noble talents in behalf of liberty and justice. His bias did not prevent him from being on many occasions a far-sighted statesman, gifted with amazing intuitive and even prophetic powers. His speeches and writings remain a mine of political maxims, of wise saws and modern instances. In defense of oligarchy he is, as always, a splendid rhetorician and advocate. But he is not a seeker after truth; he is not a philosopher.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Burke was also influenced by his acute concern over the effect of these measures on the stock-jobbing operations of his friend William Burke. See Magnus, *Edmund Burke*, (London, 1939) 72-75.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Sir James Mackintosh, "The greatest philosopher in practice whom the world ever saw," quoted in Brougham, *op. cit.*, *supra*, note 39, p. 171; Morley, "The largest master of civil wisdom in our tongue," *op. cit.*, *supra*, note 29, p. 314; MacCunn, "a great mind . . . instinct with the philosophic spirit," *op. cit.*, *supra*, note 5, p. 15; Laski, *Political Thought from Locke to Bentham*, p. 278, "hardly a greater figure in the history of political thought in England"; Cobban, *op. cit.*, *supra*, note 41, p. 37, one of "the two greatest figures in the history of English political thought"; McGann, "The Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke," *Thought* V, p. 474, "the foremost position among political philosophers"; Millar, "The Modern State and Catholic Principles," *Thought* V, pp. 42, 51, "the greatest philosopher-statesman thus far known to history."

## JACQUES MARITAIN

EST, EST, NON, NON.

By RUTH NANDA ANSHEN



WHEN one who is a sympathetic observer of the calm solidity of Christian thought comes into the presence of Jacques Maritain, when one is overwhelmed by the genius of his thought and by the ontological profundity of his analysis of truth in accordance with his hypothesis, one may well be convinced that the dark world of satanic powers will pass from one's mind. Here one discerns the possibility of finding oneself ultimately in the presence of an Ideal Judge who knows all Good and Evil. The world as we approached it seemed so restless, so disheartening, without teleological validity. The world of our postulates was a brighter one only because we determined to make it so. But there was something lonely and isolated in the thought that the postulates received, as a response from the world of reality, only their own echo—and often not even that. Their world was rather their own creation than an external and universal truth that gave them independent substance and support. Frequently there seemed nothing solid that could reverberate at all. But Jacques Maritain is convinced that we all may look upon a truth that is indeed dependent on no subjective longings of ours, no whims of social tradition, no demands of our personal narrow lives. He has rediscovered for himself and for others the fact that all truth is known to One Thought, and that Thought, Infinite. It is infinite Intelligence which is above all and through all, embracing everything, judging everything, infallible, perfect. This is Jacques Maritain's contribution to contemporary philosophy—an apostrophe to Reason and its decisive influence on the life of humanity. M. Maritain points out the disastrous dehumanization in the existential continuum of the life of man when Reason is abandoned, and he eloquently indicates the ineluctable necessity of sur-

rendering the fluctuating will to an immanent and common Reason.

Ever since the Middle Ages, the world has lost an integrating principle. There has been a futile effort to substitute scientific explanation for metaphysical meaning. The medieval thinkers, St. Thomas Aquinas in particular, were warmly aware that the community is based upon the guiding and shaping power of a spiritual value and in the adaptation of the laws of nature. This transcending and shaping power, Maritain warns, is not contained either in the idea of scientific empiricism, moral empiricism, in the idea of bourgeois society or in the concepts of some collective consciousness. All lack the concrete substance, the existential value of an idea which is capable of integrating life beyond the borders of the subordination of ends to means. The substitution of the idea of indefinite progress for the idea of meaning and purpose has resulted in a metaphysical agnosticism, an educational secularism and a bourgeois humanism which has left the soul of man bewildered, full of fear, lost and without hope.

Furthermore, Jacques Maritain teaches that as soon as men refuse to be ruled primarily by God, they condemn themselves to be ruled primarily by man; and if they decline to receive from God the leading principles of their moral and social conduct, they are bound to accept them from the king, or from the state, or from their race, or from their own social class. In all cases, there will be a state-decreed philosophical, moral, historical, and even scientific, truth, just as tyrannical in its pretensions, and much more effective in its oppressions of individual conscience than any state religion may ever have been in the past.

Maritain warns us against the encroachments of the totalitarian state in its various forms, and points out that our only conceivable protection, humanly speaking at least, is in a powerful revival of the genuine feeling for the universal character of truth. I say feeling, because it is a natural temptation for everyone to coin a truth of his own, made after his own image and likeness, so that this anthropomorphism may



give us at the same time the solipsistic pleasure of self-contemplation. It has so often been thought and written that the discovery of truth is a personal affair, that we have almost come to think that truth is a personal affair. Yet the most commonplace truth itself is infinitely better than a whole system of the most original errors. Now, perhaps, is the time for us to remind ourselves of the ancient Greek principle that unity is better than multiplicity. Not uniformity, which is the mere lack of diversity, but unity, that is to say the rational ordering of a manifold reality. Maritain believes that truth is one, consonant with itself throughout the irreducible multiplicity of the degrees of knowledge. Maritain is convinced that truth consists of finding out an order where there is one as in nature and putting it where there is none, or not enough of it, as in moral, social and political life. Maritain affirms that and upon these questions depends the future of the mind and of what is left of its liberty.

If it is our conviction that truth is one in its diversity, it will be an absolute duty to accept Reason as the only adequate form of philosophy. Humanly and naturally speaking, there is no unifying force above Reason. Speaking from the point of view of the absolute, what Maritain calls divine Reason itself is the only unifying force. What is true from the point of view of Reason is true from the point of view of the universe; for the only thing that lies behind truth is reality itself, which is the same for all. Not so with feeling; not so with intuition, be it the highest form of aesthetic or metaphysical intuition; and still less than with anything else, with the will, its passions, desires or interests of any kind. Each time philosophy yields to the temptation of giving up Reason as an organizing power, it axiomatically brings about the triumph of those obscure forces whose self-assertion is their only possible justification. Deep intuition is always one's own intuition; good taste is always one's own taste; sacred feelings are always one's own feelings, and, in the final analysis, lawful interests are always one's own interests. Where these forces do not serve individual selfishness, they serve the still more tyrannical selfishness of social groups and national

groups. The only thing in the natural order that is unconditionally and unreservedly neither mine nor yours, but ours, is Reason. But what is the proper use of Reason?

M. Maritain informs us that Reason consists in using it according to its own nature, which is to judge things according to what they are. Sound Reason is at the same time realism. In spite of their many differences, all varieties of idealism agree precisely in this, that nature is determined by laws of the human mind. Realism in accordance with M. Maritain, on the contrary, always stands firm in the Greek conviction that the human mind is right when it conforms to reality. In other words, Reason, taken in its purest form, is always intertwined with some sort of realism. Now it is a fact that ever since the 17th century, realism has been considered by most philosophers as a naive and antiquated position. Until the realistic reaction that has recently occurred, particularly in England and in the United States, scholasticism remained, as Maritain points out, the only upholder of a seemingly lost cause. We are now beginning to be cognizant of the vital issues which were at stake, in the most concrete order of reality, behind those academic discussions. When it is pursued to its ultimate conclusions, reason of the idealistic type always considers itself justified in prescribing what reality ought to be. As he rejects all material and external criteria of what is true or false, the idealist usually ends by establishing what is his own individual truth as a universally valid dogma. Reason itself then becomes the very reverse of what it should be; instead of a unifying force it acts as a principle of intellectual and social division.

Jacques Maritain points out the dangers of solipsism. It is a common experience of mankind that the ideas of the individual prove of profound, egocentric satisfaction to himself. Man has an alarming ingenuity for building theories, or a general interpretation of an enormous number of facts, on the knowledge of a very small number of facts. And once his convictions have been formed, man with his strange congenital alacrity adheres to them, in spite of all that other people, equally satisfied with their own convictions, may say to the contrary. What does this

mean, if not that man is naturally, normally, sadly, the prisoner of his own convictions? What is tenable for the daily convictions of man is also tenable for philosophy and science. By deciding that the human mind is free to prescribe its own laws to things, idealism has, under the pretense of liberating the human mind from those things, enslaved the mind to itself. This is the reason why man is today confronted with the multiplicity of scientific interpretations of the world, each of which is equally dogmatic in itself and diametrically opposed to the others. As to contemporary philosophy, it is indisputable that each philosopher has his own system, and that far from being disturbed at the idea that his system is not accepted by others, that in fact it may be repudiated, he rather derives a martyr's joy from it. Modern philosophers for the most part disagree; it is their very essence, because they are idealists, while the only thing which can reconcile different minds is the recognition of an independent reality upon the existence and nature of which they can agree. There must be a common agreement on a certain number of fundamental doctrines and all philosophers must admit the existence of an order of things and endeavor to express it. Unfortunately, in contemporary philosophy, as M. Maritain makes us poignantly aware, the effort of an idealist has no other object than to express his mind, which results in the impoverished condition of a multiplicity of sterile philosophies and a paucity of fecund minds.

Indeed, what is a mind that feeds upon itself? It is empty. The real function of the human mind is not to describe things as it sees them, but as they are. Either we shall be free from things, and slaves to our minds, or free from our minds because submitted to things, or rather to the intelligible truth which is embodied in them and akin to our mind. Reason always was and will forever remain the source of our personal liberty, and also will forever remain the only guarantee of our social liberty.

Jacques Maritain, upon whose metaphysical and generous heart lie heavily the burdens and sadness of contemporary existence, stresses that the condition of our intellectual and moral healing is the acknowledgment that truth, morality,

social justice and beauty are necessary and universal in their own right. It will then become known that there is a spiritual order of realities whose absolute right it is to judge even the state, and eventually to liberate mankind from its oppressions. As M. Maritain explains, not an anthropocentric but a theocentric humanism must be achieved, for in the conviction that there is nothing in the world above universal truth lies the very essence of intellectual and social freedom. The gospel does not demand of us: it seems to me, hence it is so, or, it does not seem to me, hence it is not so, but rather, *est, est; non, non*.

Man is not isolated although in him alone the life current overcomes resistance that elsewhere has arrested its advance. Yet he is different; for in him we find no limit set to that advance nor do we see any resistance that shall bring it to an end, not even, perhaps, the barrier of death. An implacable law decrees that spirit must encounter the resistance of matter, that life cannot advance without bruising that which lives, and that great moral results are purchased by much blood and many tears. But for Jacques Maritain humanity is saved in the midst of material suffering from moral downfall while the people appealing in their desolation to the heroism of love, raise on high the paean of deliverance from the depths of ruin and of grief. To the force which feeds only on its own brutality M. Maritain opposes that which seeks outside and above itself a principle of life and renovation. While the one is gradually spending itself, the other is continually remaking itself, and reveals to us our creative power in a life that has become our own—a life we guide and determine towards the fulfillment of our destiny. To Jacques Maritain we owe an everlasting debt of gratitude, gratitude for the reassurance that the life of the spirit is not dead, and that Reason will ultimately inspire us, will be our beacon light in the valley of the shadow.

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# MARITAIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCIENCES

By YVES R. SIMON



THE upholders of the Thomistic revival which began late in the nineteenth century were soon confronted with the following challenge: Because the philosophical principles of Thomism had been established at a time when positive science was in its infancy, it was asserted that Thomism was forbidden ever to deal successfully with the problems of our time. There could be no provision made in the system of St. Thomas for the interpretation of either the results or the spirit of modern science, both of which influence so deeply the very statement of our philosophical problems. The collapse of Aristotelian physics had entailed the general ruin of the Thomistic philosophy; against this verdict, rendered at the time of Galileo and Descartes, there could be no appeal. Thomism was at best a remarkable phase in the development of Western thought. If something of it could be revived, it was a certain inspiration, a certain aspiration, a certain frame of mind, but not any part of the systematic synthesis actually known under the name of Thomism.

Such was the only possible attitude for those who did not believe that any part of philosophy is independent of the data of positive science. Less radical-minded persons were willing to make an exception for metaphysics, considering that our knowledge of the one, the true, and the good is little affected by what happens in physics and mathematics. But when there is a question of cosmology, psychology, even of logic, the restoration of a philosophy conceived in the Middle Ages was deemed plainly impossible. The result was a number of eclectic constructions in which St. Thomas was permitted to supply a few general truths but not any refined and detailed achievement.

On the other hand, scholars convinced of the perennial truth of St. Thomas's philosophy were engaging in an ambiguous task: that of finding points of agreement between the teaching of St. Thomas and that of modern sciences. In the domain of

psychology in particular, there is quite a literature about St. Thomas corroborated by the most modern and positive research.

As a matter of fact, in order to know how far Thomism was affected by modern developments in the positive sciences, a group of preliminary questions had to be investigated. What about the object of philosophy? Has philosophy any distinct object? What about the unity of philosophy? Is philosophy a science or not? One science or several? What is the significance of the distinction between philosophical and positive knowledge? Is it a necessary and everlastingly indispensable distinction, or a merely provisional one? What about the kind of truth that belongs to philosophy? To positive knowledge? Is it the same or not? All these questions have received invaluable elaboration from the critical research whose climax was the publication, in 1932, of *The Degrees of Knowledge*.<sup>1</sup>

The pioneers of the Thomistic revival had rather vague ideas about the nature of the disciplines which some of them practiced with great ability. It seems that they were not particularly interested in problems pertaining to the specification of philosophical sciences. Today we consider it a paradox that Thomists have ever accepted a division of philosophy which was initiated by Wolff, consolidated by Kant, popularized by the Eclectics of the school of Cousin, and was fundamentally at variance with that upheld by St. Thomas. Our old masters undertook the restoration of the Thomistic philosophy without having asked themselves what conception of philosophy and of its divisions a philosophy must adopt in order to be consistently Thomistic. Rediscovering the genuine Thomistic concept of philosophy, reasserting it against many sorts of eclectic combinations—this is a task that Maritain has carried out with an uncompromising spirit of exactness and accuracy.

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<sup>1</sup> Main writings of Maritain concerning the philosophy of sciences: *Réflexions sur l'intelligence*, Paris, 1924, Ch. 6 and 7; *Distinguer pour unir ou les Degrés du savoir*, Paris, 1932 (English translation, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Scribner's, New York, 1938); *La Philosophie de la nature*, Paris, 1935; *Science and Wisdom*, Scribner's, New York, 1940; *Scholasticism and Politics*, Macmillan, New York, 1940, Ch. 2.

It is now currently known that the whole doctrine of St. Thomas concerning the theory of science and philosophy is commanded by the distinction of three orders of speculative abstraction. In an early treatise, the *Expositio super Boetium de Trinitate*, St. Thomas develops, explains, and justifies the tripartite division of theoretical knowledge which had been outlined by Aristotle. Some theoretical objects are such that they can neither exist nor be thought of without matter, i. e., apart from the principle which makes things both perishable and observable. Others are such that they can be thought of without any reference to sensible qualities and the principles of mobility, although they cannot exist except in corruptible and observable subjects. Finally, some theoretical objects are determined by such a law of abstraction that they can both be thought of and exist apart from matter. The general division of theoretical knowledge based upon the consideration of the orders of abstraction is most profoundly objective, since it proceeds from the characteristics of the scientific object as such. Theoretical knowledge is primarily divided into *physics*, *mathematics*, and *metaphysics*.

This primary division which is the indispensable foundation of all Thomistic speculation about science and philosophy was strangely disregarded by the Thomists of the nineteenth century. According to the categories set up by Wolff, their metaphysics falls into a general metaphysics, and a special metaphysics itself divided into three disciplines: cosmology, psychology, natural theology (the latter being designated, to make things worse, by the absurd term "theodicy"). Such a conception upsets radically concepts which play an essential role in the Thomistic synthesis. Considering the philosophy of the world (cosmology) and the philosophy of the soul (psychology) as parts of metaphysics is, from a Thomistic point of view, completely nonsensical; for the whole observable world, including the human soul which is the form of a perishable body, belongs to the order of objects which can neither exist nor be thought of apart from matter.

Maritain has devoted unflagging effort to the restoration of

the concept of philosophy of nature. Badly discredited in the nineteenth century by the romantic *Naturphilosophie*, this concept had never been satisfactorily defined, inasmuch as the disciples of Aristotle never succeeded in distinguishing clearly philosophy of nature from positive science. St. Thomas uses promiscuously the expressions *philosophia naturalis*, *scientia naturalis*, *physica*. The problem is whether there is room within the first order of abstraction for more than one approach to the physical world.

In this connection, the Thomistic tradition includes possibilities of which the Thomists themselves were not sufficiently aware. Each order of abstraction admits of an inner differentiation. The great commentator of St. Thomas whom Maritain knows so well and loves so dearly, John of St. Thomas, points out with his usual clarity that within one and the same order, various degrees of abstraction determine so many distinct sciences. For instance, within the second order the Thomists distinguish the degree of abstraction proper to geometry and the higher degree proper to arithmetic. Within the third order of abstraction three degrees and correspondingly three sciences are distinguished: logic, metaphysics, theology. John of St. Thomas explains that the abstraction which defines an order is an initial one and consists in the disregarding of some sort of material data: individual matter in physics, sensible matter in mathematics, all matter in metaphysics. Once this initial abstraction is effected, the mind has entered into an order of intelligibility which should not be compared with a bi-dimensional plane but rather with a tri-dimensional space. For within this sphere of intelligibility the mind still enjoys the freedom of moving up and down in such a way as to reach various degrees of terminal abstraction.

Ancient Scholastics had only vague hints of the inner differentiation of the first order of abstraction. Applying to the first order the principles which had satisfactorily accounted for the inner differentiation of the second and third was to be attempted. Maritain restored and purified the Thomistic concept of philosophy of nature through a mere elaboration of an undeveloped aspect of historical Thomism.



Every representation concerning the observable world shows a dualistic or bipolar character inasmuch as it refers to an intelligible object expressing itself through a stream of sense appearances, and to a stream of sense appearances stabilized by a center of intelligibility. This bipolar character of the physical object and its representation is clearly suggested by the traditional definition of physics as the science of the *ens mobile seu sensibile*. The physical object is both intelligible (*ens*) and observable (*mobile seu sensibile*). Neither of these opposite characteristics can be disregarded without its specific nature being destroyed. Leave out the words *mobile seu sensibile* and we are no longer dealing with something physical. Leave out the word *ens* and we fall below the level of intellectual knowledge.

Yet physical thinking, while bound to adhere to the two aspects of its object, can put a particular emphasis on either one. If the emphasis is put on *ens*, we have a form of knowledge both ontological and physical, a philosophical physics, a philosophy of nature. If the emphasis is put on *mobile seu sensibile*, we have a discipline of a physical and non-ontological character, an empiriological science. This point must be insisted upon: the privilege granted to either pole of the physical object is only a matter of emphasis. The philosopher of nature is not a metaphysician, and his definitions ought to imply some reference to data of sense experience. On the other hand the empiriologist is not a mere dealer in sense experiences, for the observable regularities with which he deals owe their constancy and their consistency to their being organized by some *ratio entis*. In this connection it is fitting to stress the felicitous character of this newly coined expression, *empiriological sciences*. Speaking of empirical sciences is objectionable, though customary, since empiricism is said in contradistinction to scientific knowledge. Empiriological sciences are not mere empiricism, but a system of experience organized by an essential reference to a principle of intelligibility, *ἐμπειρία μετὰ λόγον*.

How physical thinking organizes itself around either pole of its object can be best evidenced by investigating the way physical definitions are constructed and justified. A typology

of physical concepts is the real key to the opposition between philosophy of nature and positive science.

Let us try a rigorous ascertainment of the meaning of a word found both in philosophical and in positive contexts. The example chosen may be very simple. To the question *what does the word man mean?* the answer will be "rational animal"; now, none of the elements of this definition presents a character of irreducible clarity. Take one of them, for instance, animal. What does this word mean? A correct definition would be: "a living body endowed with sense knowledge," and these are so many terms which badly need clarification. Take one of them, for instance, "living." I would say that a body is a living one when it moves itself, when it is the active origin of its own development. If we go any step farther, we go beyond the limits of physical thought. In order to render the idea of life clearer, we would have to define it as self-actuation. The concept of self-actuation does not imply any reference to the proper principles of corruptible and observable things: it is a metaphysical concept. Its elements are identity and causality. Identity is the first property of being. Causality can be analysed into potency and act. Identity, potency, and act are so many concepts directly reducible to that of being, which is, in an absolute sense, the first and the most intelligible of all concepts. We have reached the ultimate term of the analysis, the notion which neither needs to be nor can be defined and which does not admit of any beyond.

This is the kind of analysis that the word *man* suggests when it is used in certain contexts. Everybody would agree that a discourse which demands such an analysis is a philosophical one. But the same word *man* is often used in contexts which neither demand nor could stand such an analysis. I happen to find the word *man* in a treatise on zoology: explaining it in the way we did just now would seem perfectly ridiculous. An analysis whose term is the concept of being has obviously nothing to do with the behavior, the method, the spirit and the principles of the whole discipline we call zoology. Should a univocally-minded philosopher try to enlighten a zoologist by giving him explanations about self-actuation as a particular

form of relationship between potency and act, no doubt the zoologist would burst into laughter and declare that all these stories are perfectly nonsensical for him as a scientist.

The zoologist would be right and the philosopher would be univocally-minded. Both philosopher and zoologist consider man, but they have a different way of defining objects and of answering the question *what does it mean?* For the zoologist, man is a mammal of the order of Primates. How would he define such a term as mammal? A vertebrate characterized by the presence of special glands secreting a liquid called milk. How is milk defined? In terms of color, taste, average density, biological function, chemical components, etc.

Here the ultimate and undefinable element is some sense datum; it is the object of an intuition for which no logical construction can be substituted and upon which all the logical constructions of the science of nature finally rest. In some cases, the explanation of a positive definition quickly demands recourse to sense experience. This often happens in the least elaborated parts of science. The elaboration of scientific concepts generally postpones the time when the recourse to sense intuition appears indispensable. But sooner or later it always imposes itself unmistakably. It is the possibility of being ascertained through sense experience which gives the concept its positive meaning. Every concept is meaningless for the positive scientist which cannot be, either directly or indirectly, explained in terms of sensations.

The philosophy of nature can be defined as a physical consideration whose conceptual instruments call for an ascending analysis, positive science as a physical consideration whose conceptual instruments call for a descending analysis. The very opposition of the two analyses provides an invaluable rule for the determination of the point of view prevailing in our studies about nature. Let us think of the ambiguous literature which stands on the borderline between philosophy and positive science. When a philosopher informed of positive science or a scientist interested in philosophy considers philosophical problems raised by the study of positive questions, the philosophical and the positive point of view appear successively in his ex-

positions; generally the writer is not aware of the shift. The resulting confusion can easily be removed provided we carry out the analysis of a few key concepts. According as this analysis goes up or down, according as the concept demands to be explained in more and more characteristically ontological terms or in terms which refer more and more directly to definite experiences, we know whether we have to do with a philosophical or a positive treatment.

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This description of positive science as a consideration of the *ens mobile seu sensibile* which puts the emphasis upon *mobile seu sensibile* and centers around the observable aspects of things throws a novel light on the notion of the science of phenomena. Let us have a glance at the adventurous history of this notion.

At the dawn of Greek philosophy, a science of phenomena is deemed impossible both by Parmenides and by Heraclitus. Science demands an unchangeable and necessary object; the phenomenal universe shows only a stream of changing appearances. The phenomenon, owing to its mutability, is thoroughly uncongenial to the spirit of scientific knowledge. This negation persists in Plato. The phenomenal world is the object of a merely opiniative knowledge; science finds its object in a transcendent world of numbers and ideas.<sup>2</sup> With Aristotle the picture is quite different. Aristotle realizes that there are immutable types immanent in the physical world: these are universal natures which reveal themselves through the regularities that are observed in the very order of phenomena. Accordingly, the phenomenon no longer has the character of an enemy of scientific thought. It is the phenomenon which, through its regularities, leads the scientific mind to its object: the universal types of things, their essences, their forms of being. The science so defined is a philosophy of nature, an ontology of the physical world. It does not reach its end until it is able to answer the question "What *is* the thing under consideration?" Neither Aristotle nor any of his Thomistic followers has ever construed

<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that in this sketch we content ourself with pointing out major features of the systems under consideration.



the unwarranted idea of an intuitive perception of essences. Yet their scientific ideal is definitely attached to the disclosure, the understanding of the intelligible types immanent in the observable world. However essential may be the observation of phenomena in such a science, this science is by no means a science of phenomena. It is exclusively, or rather claims to be—for Aristotle did in fact perform great achievements in empiriological disciplines—a science of the essences located beyond the phenomena.

It can be safely said that the science of phenomena did not receive any epistemological charter before Kant. The charter it was given by Kant is an idealistic one. Hardly conscious of its nature in the era preceding the Kantian *Critique*, the science of phenomena, from then onward, was to be acknowledged as a distinct and fully legitimate epistemological species. But how is the old problem answered in the *Critique* of Kant? What sort of solution is given to the difficulty resulting from the sharp conflict between the requirements of the scientific spirit—necessity, universality, intersubjectivability—and the most obvious characteristics of the phenomenal world, its endless diversity, its thorough unsteadiness? There can be no doubt about it: the principles which, according to Kant, organize nature, do not lie in nature, but in the mind. The scientific object, with its characteristics of orderliness, determination, and universality, results from the application of mental categories to the diversity of sense-experience data.

Most men of science, ever since the Kantian reformation, have assented to the fundamentally idealistic view that the characteristics of the scientific object, its aptitude to fit in an intelligible system and, above all, to comply with the requirements of causal identification, are a proper effect of the constructive or synthetic activity of the mind. This stubborn adherence to an idealistic justification of positive science conflicts strikingly with the spontaneous realism of scientific thought. Men of science, willingly or not, receive their philosophical ideas from philosophers; they could not rid themselves of idealistic prejudices while philosophers were teaching idealism as the only doctrine that may account for the un-

questionable ability of the mind to treat in an orderly and causal manner the universe of phenomena.

In his dealing with phenomena, Aristotle has no other purpose than that of utilizing their regularities in order to know essences. Maritain calls *dianoetical intellection* the act of the mind which penetrates an essence and perceives what the thing is. For instance, the philosophical definition of man as analysed above expresses an intellection which, inexhaustive and non-intuitive though it is, has succeeded in penetrating the whatness of human nature. We know that such a triumph of the theoretical intellect is a rare achievement. In most cases we cannot disclose the essences of sensible things in their specificity, we cannot accomplish a dianoetical intellection of their whatness. All we can do is to distinguish them through a definition calling for a descending analysis. The intellection expressed by such a definition does not imply any penetration of the physical essence, it only implies a circumscription of it within a steadily connected ensemble of observable regularities. Nobody can say what the essence of silver is; yet silver is a perfectly distinct chemical species. The undisclosed essence called silver is clearly and certainly distinguished from any other essence<sup>3</sup> by the system of observable regularities which taken together belong exclusively to it. In this connection let us call attention to a difficulty often experienced by positive scientists when they try to give their definitions a logically satisfactory form. We include in the definition of silver the property of melting at  $960.5^{\circ}$  centigrade, the property of boiling at  $2000^{\circ}$ , etc. But in the proposition, silver melts at  $960.5^{\circ}$ , what does the subject, silver, refer to, if not to something which is specified precisely by the fact that it melts at  $960.5^{\circ}$ ? The vice of circularity seems inevitable. The statement that silver melts at  $960.5^{\circ}$  resembles very much the statement that a black cat is black. Or, if we wish to avoid mentioning the predicate in the logical subject, we are confronted with a host of predicates hailing upon nothingness as a subject. In fact a subject is not

<sup>3</sup> I abstract from the question whether an empiriological species like silver coincides with an ontological species, or is merely a sub-determination of a broader ontological species.

lacking, but whereas the many predicates belong to the order of phenomena, the subject belongs to another order. Throughout the chapter of chemistry which constitutes a definition of silver, a certain ontological *x* unreflectingly designated by this name, silver, is present, though undisclosed, to the mind. The logically satisfactory definition of silver would be: *x* melts at  $960.5^{\circ}$ , boils at  $2000^{\circ}$ , etc.; we give the name of silver to the hidden essence which we circumscribe by this steadily connected set of observable regularities. Whereas the being of things is successfully penetrated by the dianoetical intellection used in philosophy of nature, it is only circumscribed by the *perinoetical* intellection of empiriological science. The intelligible element which enables empiriological knowledge to transcend empiricism is not revealed to the mind; it is neither constructed by the mind nor imposed by it upon the phenomenal matter. It is grasped by the mind inside a system of phenomenal regularities, circumscribed by this observable system and never disengaged from it. Thus the science of which Aristotle had no clear notion—although he practiced it a great deal—the science which has for its object the phenomenal regularities themselves, is defined as possible on a realistic basis. The orderly character of the phenomena is guaranteed by the ontological *x* which is confusedly grasped together with them by the empiriological analysis. With Maritain, the science of phenomena was given for the first time a justification which owed nothing to the idealistic interpretation of the mind's activity.

It is clear that in this conception a positive science of nature can exist independently of any mathematical treatment of natural phenomena. The Kantian statement that "the amount of genuine science found in each department of natural knowledge cannot be greater than the amount of mathematics found in it" shockingly conflicts with the fact that most important developments whose scientific character can hardly be questioned seem to be by nature refractory to mathematical forms (in biology and psychology especially). Whenever the mind seizes an essence, a *ratio entis*, albeit in the blind way proper to the perinoetical intellection, a genuinely scientific treatment remains possible. Any universal and necessary form of being,

however obscure may be the way it is grasped, constitutes a matter to which the mind can apply the principles of scientific thought, that is, causal and explanatory schemes. With great care Maritain pointed out that causal ideas and principles, when applied in empiriological sciences, have to be reshaped or refashioned. The concept of efficient cause, for instance, is originally an ontological concept, that is, a concept, defined by reference to being; in this original condition it is not directly applicable outside the ontological order. When we go down to the empiriological level, the concept of being undergoes a transformation. Here, being no longer appears as the lighted spot of the thing under consideration, but merely as an undisclosed principle of orderliness which guarantees the steady character of the phenomenal regularities upon which light is concentrated. Causal concepts have to undergo a transmutation completely analogous to that undergone by the concept of being. This operation can make them hard to recognize, and this is how some extreme forms of positivism have been able to construe the ideal of a purely legal science which would owe nothing to causal concepts. But it is well known that the spontaneous development of positive sciences has constantly given the lie to this ideal limit of positivism.

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Considering again the current contention that Thomism cannot account for modern epistemological developments, let us now remark that it refers especially to the mathematical aspect of modern science. Did not the Cartesian reformation consist in the substitution of a mathematical interpretation of the physical world for the Aristotelian interpretation of nature in terms of ontology?

The mathematical treatment of physical nature was not totally unknown to ancient and medieval Aristotelianism. Astronomy, optics, and acoustics are referred to in the works of Aristotle and his medieval followers as so many *mixed sciences*, whose form is mathematical and whose matter is physical. In this connection, it is necessary to correct current statements concerning the lack of explicit distinction between philosophy



and positive science in ancient and medieval philosophers. Old Aristotelians failed to distinguish clearly two types of thought, corresponding to distinct degrees of abstraction within the first order, and the term *physicus* is taken by them as entirely synonymous with the term *philosophus naturalis*. In that sense it is true that up to the modern era philosophy embraced all sciences of nature. But this holds only so far as positive research assumes purely physical ways. Ancient and medieval philosophers seem to be rather keenly aware of a discrepancy between the ways proper to the *philosophia naturalis* and those proper to physico-mathematical sciences. Whereas it never occurs to them to set in opposition the *physicus* and the *philosophus naturalis*, they currently set in opposition the *philosophus physicus* and the astronomer, thus showing some realization of the non-philosophical character of the mathematical interpretation of nature.

Maritain describes the epistemological crisis which broke out at the time of Galileo and Descartes and is still so far from being settled as a *tragic misunderstanding*.<sup>4</sup> When the historic conflict between the Aristotelian physics and the new physics opened, both sides were equally convinced that this was a conflict between two philosophies of nature. The physico-mathematical science founded by Descartes was taken by its very founder as a philosophy of nature and the only possible one. The decadent Aristotelians with whom Descartes was confronted did not even think that the Cartesian world-picture was possibly a physico-mathematics sophisticated into an ontology. Then it happened that the Cartesian mechanism achieved the obliteration of the old distinction between the philosopher of nature (*physicus*) and the mathematical interpreter of nature (*astronomus, musicus . . .*). When we re-read the great work of Newton significantly entitled *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, we realize that the Newtonian science, once considered by positivists as the archetype of positive knowledge, was far from having rid itself of ontological ambitions.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Conflict of Methods at the end of the Middle Ages*, THE THOMIST, Oct. 1941.

Thanks to his felicitous description of a non-philosophical approach to the physical world within the first order of abstraction, Maritain found himself in a favorable position to investigate the principles of physico-mathematical knowledge and to account for the increasingly complete autonomy which marked its latest developments. In this undertaking, Maritain had at hand two effective instruments: one was his theory on perinoetical intellection and descending analysis; the other was the conception of the mathematical object as a *preter-real* entity always affected by some *conditio rationis* and which often turns out to be a mere *ens rationis* with a foundation in the real.

It is comparatively easy to see how the law of the descending analysis which prevails in all fields of positive knowledge applies to the mathematical interpretation of nature. Whereas in the case of a non-mathematical positive science the law of descending analysis amounts to the necessity of resolving all concepts into observable data, this law, when applied to a science of physico-mathematical type, signifies the necessity of resolving all concepts into *measurable* data. Nothing makes sense for the positive scientist in general except what can be explained in terms of observations. Nothing makes sense for the physico-mathematician except what can be explained in terms of measurements. A great deal of confusion often results from the fact that the philosopher of nature and the physicist use the same terms without in most cases being aware of their referring to widely different objects. One and the same term refers to the being of things when used by the philosopher and, when used by the physicist, to the aptitude of things to be the matter of accurate measurements. No wonder that such widely different points of view give birth to statements which in appearance conflict sharply. The conflict generally vanishes as soon as we understand that identical words convey typically different concepts and refer to distinct objects. The clearest example we can think of is furnished by the recent discussion about the determination of natural phenomena. Many philosophers and scientists attribute to the so-called indeterminism of modern physics revolutionary consequences with regard to our philosophical conception of the natural and even of the human

world. Yet it should be remarked that the point of reference used by the physicist in his definition of determinism is quite distinct from the point of reference used by the philosopher in the definition of a concept which bears the same name. True to the law of ascending analysis which is that of all philosophical thought, the philosopher considers that an event is determined when in some way or other it happens necessarily; necessity itself is defined as the property of that which cannot be otherwise than it is. The reference is ontological; the concept explains itself in terms of being. A concept so defined makes absolutely no sense for the physicist. Being and the possibility of being otherwise are not things which fall under his measurements. Accordingly, in order to be of any real use in physics the concept of determinism has to be reshaped so as to satisfy the following proportion: the determinism of the physicist is to the determinism of the philosopher as *the measurable* is to being. Thus we are led to realize that whereas the philosopher understands by *determined event* an event which follows from its causes in such a way that it cannot fail to happen, the physicist understands by *determined event* an event whose coordinates at the time *t* can be accurately calculated on the basis of an initial system of spatio-temporal data. The determinism of the physicist is an *empirio-metrical* determinism.

Because of the intervention of the mathematical *ens rationis* the gap is wider between philosophy of nature and physico-mathematics than between philosophy of nature and the other parts of positive science. In so far as physics is a formally mathematical science, in so far as it obeys the law which is that of its form, it participates in the indifference of mathematics to the reality of its object. This consideration accounts for the particular form taken in our times by the old conflict between science and common sense.

The congeries of current notions that we call common sense is far from being homogeneous. Maritain distinguishes in it a system of images and a rudimentary ontology. The imagery of common sense expresses mostly the laziness of uncultured intellects and their willingness to content themselves with cheap

representations. No wonder that this imagery has always conflicted with science and generally with every form of rational thinking. But inasmuch as physics incorporates *entia rationis* and follows the mathematical tendency to treat indifferently *entia rationis* and *entia realia*, even the sound part of common sense, its ontology, may enter into conflict with the most sound scientific speculations. The concept of relative simultaneity, for instance, appears very shocking to common sense; common sense unhesitatingly believes that the question whether two events happen at the same time must be answered by yes or no. Ontologically considered, simultaneity is absolute. Yet the concept of relative simultaneity makes sense if referred to definite possibilities of accurate measurements; this reference is thoroughly unfamiliar to common sense. Relative simultaneity is a physico-mathematical *ens rationis* founded in the real and inescapably imposed upon the mind of the physicist by the very nature of his scientific point of view.

From this it does not follow that the constructions of the physicist should be considered as mere "hypotheses" or conventions incapable of apprehending the real in any way. Maritain would not agree with the superficial statement that the philosopher has never to worry about agreements or disagreements with the physicist, on the ground that philosophy and physics are two separate domains of thought. His epistemological pluralism is by no means absolute. Let us give an idea of the distinctions which should be made and of the phases which should be surveyed in order to appreciate the bearing of physical theories with regard to the knowledge of the real.

1. The principles previously developed make it clear that a concept may be a genuine expression of the real without pertaining to the ontological type. A description of a non-ontological character is not thereby deprived of real bearing. Real, being, knowledge are so many analogical terms. An ontological description is more real than a non-ontological one, yet a non-ontological description may well be a description of the real.

2. Even within the first order of abstraction the mind often uses fictitious constructions in its approach to the real. Yet, so long as we remain within the first order of abstraction, the



realistic spirit of science is not held in check. Except for possible failures, fictions never play more than a transitional role; they are used as mere means in view of achieving a representation of the real which cannot be brought about in a more direct fashion.

3. As soon as positive science assumes a mathematical form, something entirely novel takes place. The very nature of mathematical abstraction renders mathematical thought indifferent to the reality of its object. Consequently physico-mathematical science, in so far as it yields to the attraction of its mathematical form, tends to make no difference between *ens reale* and *ens rationis*.

4. Should this tendency prevail without check, it could be said truly that physical theories do not trace phenomena to their real causes and cannot tell anything about the real course of physical events. Such is apparently the conception of physics upheld by Pierre Duhem. For Maritain this interpretation, though not without basis, amounts to an oversimplification. As a matter of fact, the attraction exercised on physics by its mathematical form is not unchecked. If the form is mathematical, the matter remains physical and accordingly there is in the very structure of the science a counteracting tendency to stick to the real and to look for explanations by real causes. Actual science is probably a compromise between these two opposite and complementary tendencies.

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However incomplete it may be, this exposition sufficiently shows that for Maritain the problem of the relationship between science and philosophy does not admit of any easy solution. Maritain is quite aware of the great improvements in knowledge which can be expected from the cooperation of the philosopher and the scientist; but he does not seem to believe that such a cooperation can ever work smoothly and without frictions. The vast ensemble of our knowledges of nature—philosophical, empiriological, empiriometrical—is apparently destined to present everlastingly a spectacle of restlessness, of precarious equilibrium, with sharp conflicts breaking out in times

of crisis. Such a lack of harmony would be sufficiently accounted for by the psychology of the scientist and that of the philosopher. It is difficult, not to say impossible, for each of them not to be biased by his own *habitus* to the point of being unable to understand his partner. But even if a perfect philosopher were also a perfect physicist, or vice versa, there still would be within the mind provided with such *habitus* ground for conflicts between the two visions of the world. Maritain says that there is some melancholy in the realization that no complete continuity can be established among our various approaches to the natural world. It is not the least merit of his extensive and profound exploration of the most diverse fields of rational activity to have removed the optimistic illusion of a perfect harmony among the functions of the mind.

Compared with the teaching which prevailed of Thomistic textbooks thirty years ago, Maritain's philosophy of sciences appears as a tremendous novelty. Yet whoever is familiar with the physical and epistemological writings of St. Thomas will admit that no Thomist has ever written a more authentically Thomistic book than the *Degrees of Knowledge*. This great work testifies that the most living and timely expression of Thomism is not reached through eclectic combinations, but through a faithful and consistent adherence to the principles of St. Thomas. How does it happen that several philosophers, consistently faithful to St. Thomas, can do no better than voice lifeless truths, badly handicapped in the struggle against living errors? I think I understood what is wrong with these respectable thinkers when Maritain not long ago pointed out, in a letter to me, that the commentators of St. Thomas have the arduous duty of disentangling the precious stuff, bit by bit and indefatigably, from the vast amount of gangue in which it is hidden. Then, alluding to some persons whom we know well, he added: "They believe they have just to crack the shell to get the nut."

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## THE ROLE OF DOGMA IN JUDAISM

By LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

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VARIOUS students, from Moses Mendelsohn in the eighteenth century to our own day, have maintained that "Judaism has no dogmas." There is doubtless some justification for this sweeping assertion in the fact that Judaism does not have any universally accepted, authoritative creed. The creed of Maimonides, drafted as part of his Commentary on the Mishna, when he was in his twenties, remains the best-known formulation of Jewish beliefs and has been taken over into the liturgy of the synagogue. Yet this creed does not possess the type of authority which attaches, for example, to Maimonides' Code of Jewish Law. Differences of view regarding the Code of Maimonides apply only to detailed regulations; no one has suggested that the work *in toto* is without merit. But such men as Crescas and Albo have maintained that Maimonides' creed as such is without authority, and that it is based entirely on principles which have no standing in Jewish tradition. Obviously such disagreement among the most eminent authorities in Judaism makes it possible for scholars to assert that no creed can be formulated for Judaism, because it is a religion without dogma.

On the other hand so critical a student of Judaism as Morris R. Cohen has observed that the very existence of Judaism implies some agreement regarding its fundamental assumptions. Clearly no religion could be preserved as a unit, or survive generation after generation, if it had no basic principles.

The difficulty which the scholar has encountered in analyzing these principles derives from failure to realize that verbal propositions, which are of superlative importance in the speculative realm, constitute but one way of articulating ideas. The use of symbols as substitutes for words and their greater precision and clarity, whether mathematical, scientific, logical, diagrammatical, or topographical, is widely understood. Less general

perhaps is the realization that ideas and truths are also expressed in works of art and music and that these forms of expression have distinctive advantages, despite their lack of the precision and clarity of symbols or even verbal propositions. These advantages lie primarily in fascination and ability to hold the interest of the observer or hearer and impress him.

Words themselves may be utilized to express truths after the manner of the arts and music, or they may bear, according to different scales of significance, diverse meanings, based on the literal one. Thus the records in Genesis, whether interpreted factually or allegorically, convey moral and theological lessons. The story of the Creation in the first chapter of Genesis contains a number of such truths. For example, the statement "male and female created He them" (*Gen.* 1. 27), while relating directly to the fact of Creation, implies also a moral meaning which might be expressed by the proposition "men and women are equal in the sight of God."

But Biblical Judaism had another even more effective manner of expressing its ideas through prescribed action. To observe the Sabbath is, in Judaism, to assert first that God created the world and second that He brought Israel out of bondage (*Exod.* 19. 11; *Deut.* 6. 15). This observance, translated into formal logical language, would be equivalent to the proposition: "God is the Creator and Redeemer of mankind and the world." The implication derives from the fact that the culmination of the work of creation was marked by the Sabbath (*Gen.* 2. 1 ff.), and that its observance implies freedom from human overlordship.

The doctrine that man is made in the image of God is expressed not as a verbal assertion of faith, but through acts of affection toward one's neighbor (*Lev.* 19. 19) and in refraining from injury to anyone (*Gen.* 9. 6).

Judaism for this reason sees the Will of God sanctifying men through His commandments, rather than through verbal confession of faith. This is apparently the basis for the distinction between Judaism and Christianity, drawn by St. Paul, emphasizing Judaism as a religion of Law and Christianity as a religion of Faith.



"Propositions expressed in action," as we may term the juristic form of articulating ideas, share the fascination but also the vagueness, fluidity, and ambiguity of artistic, musical, and narrative forms of expression. Vivid enough for those who are sensitive to them, such propositions expressed in action or commandments have little or no meaning for anyone outside the group. This is perhaps one of the reasons that Judaism never became a religion of large masses of mankind, while Christianity spread throughout the civilized world. To understand the idea implicit in the Sabbath or the other commandments required a long discipline in Jewish ritual and lifelong habits; the pagan world was destined to be won to monotheism only by clearly expressed verbal propositions regarding theology and religion.

The method of expressing ideas in action is not instrumentalism. Instrumentalism holds that a truth derives its meaning from its practical expression; in Judaism, behavior derives its meaning from the ideas it implies and symbolizes. There are instructive parallels to this method of expression in Hinduism, to which Professor Jacques Maritain has referred on occasion; though of course, in Judaism, it is the Will of God which is expressed through His commandments, and not a purely mundane aspect of truth.

Jurisprudence, too, has an analogous manner of expressing ideas. In law, frequently a decision as to right and wrong is reached on the basis of practical reasoning in the decision of the judges. The task of the legal philosopher is to extract from this decision, reached through practical reason, the speculative ideas involved. The value of the propositional formulation of the philosophical concept derives from the ease with which it can then be utilized in effecting other decisions, and even in shedding light on other fields of knowledge. However, as a religion, Judaism for many centuries avoided formulating the speculative truths implied in its commandments, preferring to let the ideas remain expressed only in terms of prescribed action.

Although Biblical and Pre-Pharisaic Judaism had no logically formulated propositions of dogma or creed, Pharisaic

Judaism did, through historical accident, develop certain statements of required belief. By the age of Maimonides, these could be expanded into a creed; though to this day there is no universally accepted authoritative creed.

Pharisaic dogma had its origin in the impact on Judaism of Persian, Egyptian, and Greek doctrines, as well as of Greek modes of expressing ideas. Hence the first verbally formulated dogmas of Judaism appear in the third and second centuries B. C.

In those centuries, for the first time, differences regarding formulated theological concepts became religious issues in Judaism. The subjects of the controversies were the teachings of the Authority of the Oral Law, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Existence of Personal Angels, and the Divine Foreknowledge and Determination of Human Actions.

In regard to each of these issues, the Pharisees held affirmative and the Sadducees negative views. As G. F. Moore puts the matter, the Sadducees "were in contemporary eyes, a religious party in Judaism, characterized by the distinguishing beliefs—or *negations* (italics mine)—which have been set forth above" (G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, 1927, I, p. 70). My own studies on Pharisaism have followed this usually accepted view, attributing the origin of dogma in Judaism to the Pharisees and regarding the Sadducean views simply as negations of the Pharisaic dogmas.

We tend to regard the Sadducean teachings as negative, and the Pharisaic teachings as positive, because we are dependent mainly on Pharisaic traditions for our information regarding the intellectual and spiritual conditions in Palestine during the second century B. C. More careful analysis of the historical situation in Palestine during the last half of the third century and the first half of the second century B. C., and a study of the traces of Sadducean and proto-Sadducean thought which have survived, e. g., in Sadducean arguments preserved in Rabbinic literature, suggests the possibility that the Sadducean teachings were originally formulated as positive dogmas, which the Pharisees negated. The Sadducees, in other words, did not

simply deny the validity of the Oral Law; they held that belief in it was heresy, because they considered it a denial of the sole authority of the Temple hierarchy. The Sadducees also regarded as heretical belief in the Resurrection, in that it denied what they regarded as a cornerstone of Judaism, the ephemeral character of the individual human life, the utter helplessness of the dead, and the futility of all forms of animistic doctrine. Similarly denial of the Existence of Personal Angels was from the Sadducean point of view an affirmation of the unity of God as the sole spiritual Being. Their denial of Divine Foreknowledge and Determination of Human Actions was—as in this instance Josephus recognizes—an affirmation of absolute freedom of the will.

There is some evidence to the effect that the view of the Pharisees in the earliest stage of the existence of the sect was in each of these instances a negation of the Sadducean view rather than an affirmation of a contrary doctrine (such as developed later). Thus the Pharisaic belief in the Oral Law was in the first instance not a dogmatic assertion that any particular system of tradition was authoritative or divinely inspired. Indeed, this could not be; for the Pharisees were not agreed among themselves in their interpretation of the Law. As late as the beginning of the Christian Era, the differences among the Pharisees were so great that (as a Rabbinic authority of the second century reminds us) “the Law became as though it were two Laws.” True, the Pharisees in those days overcame the difficulty involved in claiming authority for *the* “Oral Law” while disagreeing among themselves regarding its contents, by developing the principle that “both views are the words of the living God.” This highly sophisticated teaching, if enunciated at the beginning of the sectarian dissension, might have militated against the view that the Sadducean interpretation of the Law was definitely *not* inspired. The Sadducees claimed that their views derived from their tradition, just as the different types of Pharisee each maintained that its views derived from its tradition. What touchstone then was applied by Pharisaism to accept certain systems as within the Oral Law, and to reject the Sadducean as outside the Oral Law?

The Pharisees rejected the claim of the Sadducees that their priestly interpretation of the Law alone was authoritative. This rejection of the sole authority of the Temple hierarchy was expressed in a demand for respect for the learning and the traditions of the lay Scribes. It was only the Sadducean insistence that the lay Scribes had no authority, that in the end led the Pharisees to the extreme of declaring the traditions of these Scribes alone authoritative, as having come down from Moses himself. When this claim was ultimately made, its rejection by the Sadducees seemed to be nothing more than a negation; whereas originally it was the Sadducees who had promulgated a positive teaching in the authority of the priests, and it was the Pharisees who, as opposition, challenged this authority.

The Pharisaic assertion of the truth of the Resurrection might probably have originated, likewise, in nothing more emphatic than the toleration of this doctrine as consistent with Biblical Judaism. The Sadducees and their predecessors probably considered this doctrine related to Egyptian funerary practices, to animism, etc. The Pharisees may originally have held simply that the belief might be true; and only as the Sadducees became outspoken in denunciation of it, may the Pharisees have been moved finally to declare the denial of the Resurrection a denial of a basic tenet of Judaism.

This theory offers a more satisfactory explanation than has thus far been available for the difference in emphasis by Pharisees on various doctrinal questions. The doctrines of the Resurrection and the Oral Tradition were held vital. The doctrines of the Existence of Personal Angels and of Divine Foreknowledge and Determination of Human Actions are hardly mentioned in Rabbinic tradition, and indeed seem to have been the subject of considerable disagreement among the Pharisees and the later Talmudic scholars themselves. Yet Josephus and the Book of Acts tell us that these doctrines were matters of sectarian controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Clearly, the Sadducees considered the belief in the Existence of Personal Angels and in Divine Foreknowledge heretical. These teachings were held admissible by the Phari-



sees, though they were far from unanimous as to whether the tenets were valid.

Pharisaic unanimity regarding belief in the Oral Law and the Resurrection of the Dead may thus have been simply a result of the ferocity with which the Sadducees opposed these teachings. The Existence of Personal Angels and Divine Foreknowledge continued to be permitted, rather than affirmed, doctrines in Pharisaism, because, although the Sadducees opposed them, they were not made vital issues.

The sectarian controversy bore fruit in the appearance of a new aspect of religious Judaism: the verbal assertion of dogma. The Mishna knows of two dogmas in Judaism: the beliefs in the Resurrection of the Dead and in the Divine Inspiration of the Oral Law.

Despite this fact, and the further development of dogma by Maimonides and other mediaeval writers, the ultimate expression of Jewish doctrine remains to this day that of "propositions in action." This gives Jewish concepts a great fluidity, and explains the enormous variety of interpretation which can be put on these concepts without departing from the faith. When Maimonides tried to read out of Judaism all those who held anthropomorphic views of God, his great critic, Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquières, asked how Maimonides could dare utter these words when "many who were greater and better than he held these views." Rabbi Abraham could make this stricture because the Jewish aversion to anthropomorphism is expressed in a commandment, rather than dogma. The translation of this commandment into a verbal proposition leaves room for a wide variety of talent and great difference of opinion.

It would be a great injustice to Maimonides and his critic to regard their difference, despite the virulence of the language both men used, as involving diametrically opposed interpretations of God. The opposition appears only when the natural form of expression of Jewish concepts—that of action—is replaced with another form of expression. Essentially, Maimonides and Rabbi Abraham are trying to express the same

idea, namely, that involved in the first and second commandments of the Decalogue.

It is basic agreement on concepts when expressed in action and religious symbolism, which gives Judaism unity not only in any one period but across the ages. W. F. Albright expresses this thought effectively, when, discussing the monotheism of Moses, he remarks: "If by 'monotheist' is meant a thinker with views specifically like those of Philo Judaeus or Rabbi Aqiba, of St. Paul or St. Augustine, of Mohammed or Maimonides, of St. Thomas or Calvin, of Mordecai M. Kaplan or H. N. Wieman, Moses was not one. If, on the other hand, the term 'monotheist' means one who teaches the existence of only one God, the creator of everything, the source of justice, who is equally powerful in Egypt, in the desert, and in Palestine, who has no sexuality, and no mythology, who is human in form but cannot be seen by human eye and cannot be represented in any form—then the founder of Yahwism was certainly a monotheist." In other words, the effort to express Judaism in verbal propositions has the same effect on the understanding of the faith that a Mercator's map has on understanding of the world. Both forms of depiction indicate wide separations and distances, even among things which, seen in their own reality, are very near to one another and are indeed identical.

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# THE THOMISTIC CONCEPT OF CULTURE

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## I. WORDS AND REALITIES

A GREAT deal of contemporary literature, by writers outside the Catholic tradition, has been devoted to the problem of culture and its phenomena. When it is all sifted down, two things become quite obvious: first, that there is very little agreement among these writers about the nature and ideals of culture; second, that many errors, touching matters of both doctrine and history, have been spread abroad in the name of human progress and human enlightenment. Perhaps we can best describe the spirit of such literature by saying what it is not. Thus, it is not humanistic, in the sense of being faithful to the rational insights and rational desires of men. It is not intellectual, in the sense of correctly estimating the potentialities of the human mind. It is not ethical, in the sense of recognizing the value of the moral virtues for human living. Above all, it is not christian, in the sense of properly judging the goods of our present existence as merely a prelude to the enjoyment of the beatific vision. This last point is of special significance. For if there is a common agreement on which the anti-traditional philosophers of culture rest their cause, it is precisely this refusal to see any prize or hope or fulfillment of desire beyond the present existence. Being enemies of Christ and worshippers of the gods of materialism, they find a united front in their opposition to christianity and all its cultural claims and achievements.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote no special treatise on the subject of culture. As a matter of fact, he does not use the word at all in its modern connotation. His cultural philosophy is simply part of a larger historical development which emerges out of the wide trend of his ideas, or of what the moderns call his *world view*. What we shall try to do here is to piece together,

from works widely separated in time and subject matter, the system that integrates his views on the phenomena of culture and makes such views consistent. It will then be apparent, I think, that he knew all the principles that form the groundwork of a philosophy of culture; and, moreover, that the culture he envisioned was not a static thing, but full of dynamic forces.<sup>1</sup> One of the charges made against the Angelic Doctor is that he regarded the intellectual achievements of Aristotle as the *ne plus ultra* of human learning, beyond whose heights any further development was simply inconceivable, "a perennial peak, a timeless expression of wisdom and knowledge," in the words of Rudolf Eucken.<sup>2</sup> Before examining this charge against the Angelic Doctor (and I should like to say that it is a very common reproach of men outside the tradition), let us dwell for a moment on the meaning of culture—as a word and as a reality.

Among the ancients, the term *culture* referred to the tilling of the soil. In time, its use was broadened out to include other objects upon which much energy and care was expended. Ovid speaks of the culture of the body; Varro of the culture of the home. From material things the term gradually made its way into the realm of the spiritual; so that Cicero could discourse on the culture of mind and the culture of morals. Finally, the word was employed to signify all those human goods and human operations which are usually indicated in the modern richly-laden meaning of the term *culture*.

With so many and such diverse elements entering into its

<sup>1</sup> I cannot help referring at once to the scholar in whose honor this essay has been written. Jacques Maritain's fertile genius has given us a most profound and searching analysis of the problems of modern culture; and everywhere he has sought inspiration in the principles of Thomas Aquinas. Thus, in establishing the Angelic Doctor's essentially spiritual and dynamic attitude towards the movements of human history, Maritain points to the dual warfare which the Saint was constantly called upon to wage: first, against the excessive conservatism of certain schoolmen who clung to the purely accidental elements of the christian tradition; second, against the equally excessive liberalism of the philosophy of Averroes which came to flower when man, instead of God, was made the center of the universe. (Cf. *True Humanism*: New York, Scribner's Sons, 1938, pp. 202-03.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Die Philosophie des Thomas von Aquino und die Cultur der Neuzeit*: Halle, 1886.



present-day usage, it would seem difficult to reduce culture to a formal definition. Yet, I think it can be done if we conceive of it as a universal excellence of human nature, with emphasis on the earthly and social features of man's development. So that I quite concur with Father Donat when he defines culture as *perfectio naturae humanae socialiter possessa*; that is to say, the perfection of man's nature in its specifically human and social aspects.<sup>3</sup> It is not my purpose to contrast this definition with all the false notions that have grown up around the meaning of culture; but simply to propose a traditionally faithful concept of the essence of culture, in order to have a basis for comparison with the views of Aquinas. By this method it can be shown, I believe, that the Angelic Doctor has a rightful claim to being recognized as one of the great philosophers of culture.<sup>4</sup>

If culture implies the social development of man, it also, by that very fact, implies a close relation of human progress to the goods of our life on earth. There are several ways of indicating this truth. Thus, we can speak of culture in an *active* sense, and thereby include all the multifarious works—material, intellectual, and moral—that enter into its composition. This is the culture that cuts through the life of a people, laying bare the very core of their being and genius. As a dynamic phenomenon, it may be thought of as a progressive movement that grows and enlarges itself with the slow grandeur of centuries, into which the life-blood of wise and practical and virtuous men of every age is distilled.

*Culture* may also be used in an *objective* sense to signify the whole complexus of goods that perfect human nature. These are the fruits, so to speak, of active culture. Man can point with pride to his highly-specialized arts and sciences, his technological achievements, his laws and social institutions, and all the marvellous physical effects of his conquest over matter, space, and time.

Correlative with this aspect of man's development is his *sub-*

<sup>3</sup> *Ethica Generalis*: Oeniponti, 1920, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. Fischer-Colbrie: *De Philosophia Culturae*, in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Spekulative Theologie*: volume 17, pp. 455 ff.

*jective* culture which is nothing more or less than the actual possession of the goods that are understood to perfect human nature. We speak of men or races as having a higher or lower culture in proportion to their command over the physical, mental, moral and social accomplishments of humanity.

It is obvious at once that neither St. Thomas nor the men of his day used the word *culture* in any of the senses that we have just explained. Yet, all the ingredients that enter into our modern notion of culture were surely known to the Angelic Doctor and recognized as part of his christian inheritance. Even before the advent of christianity, we can discern the traces of a philosophy of culture that was to become firmer in outline with the spread of the New Law and its evangelical counsels and commands. "No one," exclaims Horace, "is so wild that he cannot be tamed, if only he be willing to lend an ear to culture."<sup>5</sup>

Accepting, then, the notion of culture as a perfection of human nature directed to man's social progress, let us see how the Angelic Doctor analyzed the causal factors that enter into its composition.<sup>6</sup>

## II. THE ESSENTIAL FORM OF CULTURE

If we regard culture as an organismic whole, then we can refer to human perfection as the *soul* of culture; and to all the material, intellectual, and moral goods that constitute human perfection in its social aspects as the *body* of culture. This kind of excellence, with its social orientation, was clearly known to St. Thomas. Indeed, he has laid down all the basic laws that govern both the genesis and the development of culture as a human activity. In numerous passages throughout his writings he extols the proper operations of the creature as its high-

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. I*, 1, 39.

<sup>6</sup> The clearest and most concise discussion I have seen of St. Thomas's views on culture and its causes is found in Bishop Augustin Fischer-Colbrie's *Quid Sanctus Thomas de Cultura Doceat: Xenia Thomistica*, Roma, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1925, pp. 533-51. Even the most casual reading of the Bishop's scholarly essay will reveal my deep indebtedness to him for most of the material of this paper.

est perfection, next to that most profound and ultimate perfection of all which is its being or existence.<sup>7</sup> Such a fertile concept, rightly understood in its application to man's rational nature, is almost enough in itself to furnish an integral theory of culture. For, the proper function of human nature is to think, to direct itself towards a goal of wisdom and goodness, to select prudently the means that will assure it of reaching the term of its natural happiness.

Culture in its objective aspects is referred to by the Angelic Doctor when he treats of human knowledge, of art and morality, of material goods, of the social order of human life, and of the juridical institutions that have been set up as a result of human enterprise.

Finally, the subjective features of culture are explained by Aquinas in his numerous discussions of perfection in general and of human excellence in particular. Thus:

The perfection of a thing is twofold: . . . first, that according to which it is substantially perfect, this perfection being the *form* of the whole, which results from the whole having its parts complete; . . . second, the *end*, which is either an operation (as the end of the harpist is to play the harp) or something accomplished by an operation (as the end of the builder is the house he makes by building). Further, the first perfection is the cause of the second, since the form is the principle of operation. Hence, the final perfection towards which the whole universe is directed as a goal is the consummate happiness of the blessed at the end of the world. The initial perfection of the universe, on the other hand, is its completeness at the first moment of its foundation.<sup>8</sup>

### III. THE OBJECTIVE RANGE OF CULTURE

The field of cultural activity is enormous. It embraces all the human goods that have significance for man's earthly and social life. Three groups of these goods immediately suggest them-

<sup>7</sup> *Contra Gentiles*: b. III, c. 25; also *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 184, a. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 73, a. 1. For the further elaboration of this idea, read p. I, q. 63; q. 103, a. 1; q. 105, a. 5. Also, p. I-II, q. 3, a. 2; q. 98, a. 2, reply to obj. 1; q. 161, a. 1, reply to obj. 4; q. 184, a. 1. Also, p. III, q. 27, a. 5, reply to obj. 2; q. 29, a. 2.

selves: those concerned with our physical or material welfare; those that have a bearing on our intellectual lives, whether they fall within the sphere of knowledge or of art or of moral action; and those that have a part to play in the social ordering of our human existence.

First, in regard to the material aspects of man's life, the Angelic Doctor's teaching is clear and decisive. Man is a creature who envisions two horizons in his innermost life: the horizon of matter and the horizon of spirit. "Two things Thou hast made," exclaims Augustine to his Creator, "the one almost Thee and the other almost nothing."<sup>9</sup> These are the worlds of spirit and matter; and man is a meeting place for both. Matter and spirit are of the very essence of his being. Standing between beast and angel, he shares something of the nature of both. As a staunch defender of the substantial union of body and soul, Aquinas was compelled to champion the rights of the corporeal organism and all the things in human culture that pertain to the body. Man is bound by a natural debt to live in physical contact with other men, to communicate by sensible signs, to share his material pleasures, to give his body the care, attentions and recreations that befit it as an essential part of his person. From these considerations, we infer the existence of grave obligations of justice in regard to material goods. The whole set-up of material prosperity, which is grounded on the labor and craftsmanship of human hands and the rightful possession of properties that accrue from human diligence, foresight and industry, is to be regulated by the offices of christian charity as well as christian justice. His teaching on these points is both remedial and prophylactic, a bulwark against the invasion of false socialistic theories, inhuman forms of capitalism, and usurious practices that tear apart the fabric of a true christian economy of life. Material goods must be visualized in their proper perspective, which is the perspective of eternity. As the Apostle tells us, they are to be used as though we used them not. "For, the figure of this world passeth away."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Confessions*: b. XII, c. viii.

<sup>10</sup> *I Corinthians*: c. 7.



The goods that have immediate reference to man's rational nature perfect his intellect in two ways: first, speculatively, by the various knowledges that he acquires; second, practically, by the habits of art and prudence which he develops.

As to the knowledges that are possible to man, Aquinas himself established a tradition in philosophic and theological lore which endures to this day.<sup>11</sup> According to the Angelic Doctor, man's highest dignity is reposed in his intellectual nature, where we find the image of God in its purest earthly form. The proper action of man is to rationalize and so to grow in knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Reason is man's most precious gift, and the pursuit of truth is his first and most fundamental duty. From truth is born love; so that whatever will-power is able to accomplish, it owes to the faculty of intellect which is the faculty of being, yea, even the faculty of God, since the essence of human happiness is to be found in the intellectual vision of the Divine Nature. This primacy of intellect is seen analogously in God's own mind, which is the ultimate measure of all things—their essences, the laws that govern their being, their ordered arrangement and the providential planning that directs them to their end.<sup>13</sup> And so, departing from the views of some of his predecessors, St. Thomas regards knowledge not only as a useful accomplishment, but also as a *bonum honestum*: a value that is worthy of being pursued for its own sake. "All knowledge is good because it is a perfection of man as man; and not only good, but also honorable."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The cultural value of the Thomistic synthesis is most easily shown, I should say, by reference to the *assimilative* qualities of Aquinas's philosophy: its universal outlook; its sweeping vision of reality, a vision that can interpret the experience of today as coherently as it did the experience of the ancients; its rationalization of whatever is worthwhile in modern metaphysics. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange: *La puissance d'assimilation du thomisme*, *Revue Thomiste*, avril-juin, 1939, pp. 271-84.

<sup>12</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 93, a. 4. Also, p. I-II, q. 167, a. 1, corpus and reply to obj. 1.

<sup>13</sup> On this point, v. G. Manser: *Das Wesen des Thomismus*: Die wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeit des H. Thomas v. Aquin. F. Rüttschi, Freiburg, 1935.

<sup>14</sup> In *De Anima*: b. I, l. 1. Cf. *Contra Gentiles*: b. III, c. 25. Also, *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 167, a. 1.

With regard to the aesthetic features of culture, it is quite sufficient to note the manifold references in the writings of Aquinas to beauty and its relation to life and reality, as well as his exposition of the Aristotelian concept of art as a habit of practical reason. To the cult of art for art's sake, that is, art without moral polarity, he would give no countenance. Art without ethical moorings is like a ship without a rudder: each is in imminent danger of destruction. It is inconceivable that man, as a human being, should have a code of action which holds him responsible to his Maker while man, as an artist, should be free of all moral obligation. The reason is obvious enough, since "the same human being cannot have several ultimate ends." On the contrary, "there is but one final goal for all men."<sup>15</sup> If only modern art had been more faithful to the christian ideal on which the aesthetic of St. Thomas is founded, it would certainly have saved itself from the sensualism and gross irrationalities of taste into which it has fallen.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 1, aa. 5 and 7.

<sup>16</sup> As P. Sertillanges points out, art for art's sake is Epicureanism transplanted into the field of aesthetics. In principle, it can lead to almost anything. Epicurus himself was a temperate man; yet history is practically unaware of the fact. Why? Because his moderation was almost exclusively one of his personal qualities, because it derived from his temperament rather than from his principles, and because once he was dead—and even while he was alive—his principles produced in his disciples all the effects that were naturally to be expected. The same holds true in aesthetics. Epicurus, we say, was a sober man; so art for art's sake is a sober theory. But the Epicureans and the artists present an altogether different problem. From the moment that a power like human sensuality is freed of the bonds that hold it in check, it runs to the worst excesses. Art for art's sake is the systematic suppression of all restraints; and sensuality is the permanent peril of mankind. *L'Art et la Morale*, Paris, Librairie Bloud et Barbal, 1899, p. 19.

On the other hand, one can point to the existence among Catholics of a widespread ignorance in regard to the evolution of modern art, as well as a strange apathy to the moral welfare of the artists themselves. Ask these good christians about the changes that have taken place in artistic production within the past fifty years, and you will almost certainly be disappointed by their lack of information and interest. This is most unfortunate and calls for a new apostolate. If disintegration can be detected in artistic life, one of the reasons of it is the separation of the artists from the ensemble of the cultured public and especially from the christian public. Add to this the withdrawal of creative imagination from the control of both intellect and will, and you have two potent causes for

Moral culture is illustrated in practically every piece of writing that the Angelic Doctor produced. All the acumen of his singular genius and all the incomparable energy of his apostolic spirit were given over to the cultivation of both natural and supernatural ethics, about which he writes with such utter intimacy. His life was an example of the rule of action that he preached to others: "*Prius vita quam doctrina; vita enim ducit ad scientiam veritatis*: first living and then learning; for, living leads to the learning of truth."<sup>17</sup> From the widespread confusion among ethical systems in vogue today, it is quite manifest that nothing can save the world from complete disintegration except a return to the christian way of life, so admirably expounded by Thomas in his treatises on the norms of morality, the *raison d'être* and binding power of law, and the individual obligations of mankind.

Finally, the social aspects of human culture also have been wisely explained by the Angelic Doctor; and the things he has to say are most timely for our age. As Leo XIII tells us in his encyclical on the revival of Thomism, Aquinas has left us all the principles on which a sane domestic and civil society must be founded.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, not a few of the ideas which scholars are

the disorder witnessed in the world of art today. I fear that Catholic opinion generally is not aware of this state of affairs; or if it is, the matter is looked on as something extrinsic to the obligations of the christian life—a form of snobbery or a *coup de bourse* perpetrated by money-minded art critics and art dealers. (Cf. M. A. Couturier, O. P., *Art et Catholicisme*: Montreal, Editions de l'Arbre, 1941, pp. 76-77.)

<sup>17</sup> This passage occurs in St. Thomas's well known homily on the art of preaching: *In Matthaeum*: c. 5. It is quoted by Pius XI in his Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*.

<sup>18</sup> *Aeterni Patris*: "We all see the great dangers which threaten family life, and even civil society itself, because of the pestilence of perverse opinions. Truly all civil society would be much more tranquil and much safer if healthier teaching were given in universities and schools; a doctrine more in unison with the perpetual teaching office of the Church, such as is contained in the volumes of Thomas Aquinas. He disputes about the true nature of liberty which, in these days, is passing into lawlessness; about the divine origin of all authority; about laws and their binding force; about the paternal and just government of sovereign princes, with our obedience to higher powers, and the common love that should be among all. The words of Thomas about these things, and others of a like nature,

putting forward today as of recent discovery, may be clearly discerned in the doctrines of Thomas.<sup>19</sup> There is the story, for example, of the great Roman jurist de Ihering who, after the publication of his classical *Der Zweck im Recht*, admitted that he might never have written the work had he known how lucidly St. Thomas describes the duties and functions of human society.

#### IV. THE BUILDERS OF CULTURE

Modern authors have written at great length and not always in the clearest manner on the efficient cause of culture. The conceptions of Aquinas, brief and lineamental, form a most interesting contrast. Deeply imbedded in human nature is an urge to happiness: an appetite for the goods that perfect man as a rational animal and especially as a social animal. This urge to be happy is a constant stimulus to action. Beatitude is the ultimate perfection of man. But a thing is perfect in so far as it is in act, since a faculty that is bereft of operation is lacking in excellence.<sup>20</sup>

The Creator has made most excellent provision for human happiness. No other creature on earth can boast of man's powers of insight, powers of conforming his actions to right reason, powers of searching into the hidden forces of nature and of subjecting these forces to his own will, powers of building both a domestic and a civil society in accordance with the dictates of prudence. All these gifts have been given to him to help him achieve a relative degree of excellence in this life and to furnish him with a foretaste of what his perfect happiness is to be like in the world to come.<sup>21</sup>

As with every other operable plan of man, the designs of

have the greatest strength, indeed a resistless strength, to overcome the principles of this new jurisprudence, which is manifestly dangerous to the peaceful order of society and to public safety."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. S. Deploige: *Le Conflit de la Morale et de la Sociologie*, 2nd Edition, Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1912, pp. 300-10.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 60, a. 2; q. 82, aa. 1 and 2; q. 83, a. 1, reply to obj. 5. Also, p. I-II, q. 3, a. 6; q. 5, aa. 1 and 8; q. 10, a. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 72, aa. 3 and 5. Also, p. I-II, q. 3, a. 5.



culture must be submitted to practical reason for guidance, judgment, and revision.<sup>22</sup> The works of practical reason are classified in two ways: as things to be done, and things to be made. The first type of work is immanent in its effect and is the result of prudential virtue. The second type aims at exterior production and is the result of artistic virtue—using the term *art* in its broadest meaning.<sup>23</sup>

Here, then, are the two agents involved in all human culture: the one remote, which is *human nature* with its inextinguishable craving for perfection and happiness; the other proximate, which is *practical reason* whose habits of prudence and art are the immediate instruments used by man in designing and executing his plans of cultural progress.<sup>24</sup>

Aristotle, before Aquinas, had discerned the functions of practical intellect as the true principle of human progress. Thus:

What affirmation and negation are to intellect, pursuit and avoidance are to appetite; so that, since moral virtue is a habit concerned with choice, and since choice is a deliberated appetite, therefore intellect must be true and appetite must be righteous if choice is to be good. Truth and falsehood are the good and bad habits, respectively, of speculative intellect; whereas the good habit of practical intellect is truth which is in conformity with right desire. The efficient (not the final) cause of action is choice: and the principle of choice is appetite plus reason which is directed to an end. Hence, there can be no question of choice without understanding and reason and moral habit. For good behavior and its opposite are simply inconceivable where there is no understanding, no rational procedure, and no moral character.

Thinking, of itself, does not accomplish anything, but only

<sup>22</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 91, a. 3, reply to obj. 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 57, aa. 3 and 4.

<sup>24</sup> On this important concept of practical reason as the rule and measure of man's culture, v. A. Dyroff: Ueber den Kulturbegriff der "Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate," in the *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft*: 1923, pp. 83-92. Also, S. Deploige, *op. cit.*, p. 282 and pp. 304-310. As Dyroff observes (p. 88), the conception that man's practical intellect mediates all his culture contains a whole theory of culture in seedling form. St. Thomas grasped this idea so clearly that whatever one may say on the matter henceforward will be nothing more than a broadening out of the Angelic Doctor's teaching on the subject of art and morality.

thinking which is for an end and practical in nature. This is also the rule for thinking which is concerned with the creative production of things, since a person who produces something makes it with a view to an end. Observe, however, that the end for which something is *made* is not the end in an absolute sense but only the end of a particular operation. The end of what is *done*, on the other hand, is an end without qualification; and appetite aims at such an end. For this reason, choice may be defined either as rational appetite or as appetitive reason.<sup>25</sup>

St. Thomas remarks on this passage:

Appetite is concerned with the end and whatever leads to the end. Now, man's end is already determined for him by nature; whereas the things that lead to his end are not thus determined, but must be discovered by his reason. It is manifest, then, that rectitude of appetite *in regard to end* is the measure of truth for practical intellect. From this point of view, the truth of practical intellect is determined by its concordance with right appetite. On the other hand, the truth of practical intellect is the measure of rectitude of appetite *in regard to the things that lead to the end*. From this point of view, appetite is said to be rectified when it follows the dictates of right reason. . . .

A maker always makes things with a view to their being used for a further purpose. For instance, the carpenter builds a house in order to provide a place of habitation. And so the goal of the maker is always *factum et non actum*: an object to be made and not a deed to be done. Why something to be made and not something to be done? Because, in the case of things to be done, the good action is an end in itself. Hence, to have proper desires and to exhibit righteous angers are actions that are good in themselves.<sup>26</sup>

The significance of the distinction which Aquinas here draws is of capital importance for culture. Thus, the goal of artistic production is not an end to be sought in and for itself. At best, it represents only a relative perfection of human nature. The goal of the moral virtues, on the other hand, is something that men are urged to seek for its own sake. For, artistic habits can make us competent only in a certain order; for example, good poets, good painters, good craftsmen, and so forth. But the moral habits can make us completely perfect by making

<sup>25</sup> *Ethica Nichomachea*: 1139a 21—1139b 5.

<sup>26</sup> *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. VI, 1. 2.

us good *men*. And since culture aims at the total perfection of human nature, it is obvious at once that the development of the moral virtues is much more important than the formation of artistic habits, as a ground of lasting cultural advances.

The motives that urge men to work towards a superior culture are analyzed by Aquinas in a striking passage from his *Summa*:

Because good has the nature of an end and evil the nature of what is contrary thereto, it follows that all the things towards which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as good and consequently as objects of pursuit; whereas their contraries are discerned as evils and objects of avoidance. Wherefore, according to the order of natural inclinations we find an order in the precepts of the natural law.

Thus, there is in man, first of all, an inclination to good according to the nature that he possesses in common with all substances: inasmuch as every substance tends to preserve its own existence according to its nature. And by virtue of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life and of eliminating its obstacles, belongs to the natural law.

Secondly, man has an inclination to things that appertain to him more particularly because of the nature which he shares with the beasts: and by reason of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law "which nature has taught all animals" (as we read in the *Pandect of Justinian*, I, 1), such as sexual intercourse, nurture of offspring, and so forth.

Thirdly, man exhibits an inclination to good according to the nature of his reasoning faculty which is proper to him. Thus, he has a natural impulse to know truth and to live in society: and in this regard whatever pertains to such an inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those with whom we have to live, and matters of this sort.<sup>27</sup>

Such are the driving forces—in the development of the individual, in the ordering of family life, and in the genesis of intellectual, moral, and social ideals—behind humanity's effort to create a cultural milieu which is in harmony with the laws of nature.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 94, a. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Deploige, *op. cit.*, pp: 310-44. Also, F. Sawicki. *Philosophie der Geschichte*, Kempton, 1922, p. 82 ff.

But human nature, with its faculty of practical judgment, is not something existing *in vacuo*. It has its personal characteristics as well as its racial features; its tendency to form into units for special kinds of group-action; its geographical setting and climatic surround; its ethical and juridical background; its place as a phase in the movement of history. All these factors have a definite influence upon the shape into which its culture is moulded.

The pattern of individual traits is clearly recognized by Aquinas. One man differs from another by natural aptitude and disposition, by temperament and education, by nurture and environmental influences. As a result, the range of human activities is enormously diversified. There is one thing, however, in which all human beings are alike: the common desire to secure happiness and a certain level of perfection in the activities of human nature.<sup>29</sup> Yet, even in respect to their common goal, the widest play of human faculties is possible. This is due, in part, to the fact that men do not prize the same things as conducive to happiness;<sup>30</sup> in part, to the existence of personal equations that mark some people as highly endowed, others as mediocre in talent; some as industrious, others as lazy; some as physiologically disposed to virtue, others as inclined by instinct to vice.<sup>31</sup> The whole problem of individual differences, in the domain of intellectual, moral, and physical principles of action, was quite well known to St. Thomas. Peculiarities of race and ethnological background must also be reckoned among the factors that modify a people's cultural achievements. Nor are the psychological and moral differences between racial groups overlooked by the Angelic Doctor. If primitive men are uncivilized and dull of understanding, it may be explained, to some degree at least, by their struggle against the harsh and elemental forces of nature; by the growth of habits of an unethical character, due in the main to ignorance;

<sup>29</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 1, a. 7, reply to obj. 2; q. 13, a. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. I, ll. 4 and 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 51, a. 1; q. 52, a. 1. Also, p. I, q. 85, a. 7.



and by the bad example of other peoples with whom there is social or economic commerce.<sup>32</sup>

Group action gives rise to a special kind of phenomenon which is explained by the principles of mass-psychology. While the science itself is new, the experiential facts of mass-psychology are as old as humanity, and its fundamental features were known to both Aristotle and Aquinas. Thus, a multitude of human beings is not simply a summation of the individuals who compose it. The inter-communication of human thoughts, human decisions, and human feelings, required in the pattern of mass-action, immediately endows a multitude with new mental and moral characteristics.<sup>33</sup>

Cultural evolution is deeply affected by geographical factors and conditions of climate. It makes a difference when a people are encompassed by oceans, rivers, or mountains; when they live in torrid, temperate, or frigid zones. Aquinas speaks of these regional influences and how, when unfavorable, they tend to produce material dispositions of body that in time may have their effect on the mental output and moral temper of inhabitants. True, human thought and human volition have transformed the face of the earth without demanding any appreciable amounts of the energies of the physical universe. Yet, because the body of man is so intimately linked to his soul and the faculties of his soul, his intellectual and moral activities have been profoundly modified by the land on which he lives, the air he breathes, the food that makes up his diet. The strength and weakness of races, their mental aptitudes and moral habits, their cultural rise and decline, have all been connected in some way with the various kinds of chemicals on which they have had to depend for bodily sustenance.<sup>34</sup>

What we called a moment ago the ethical environment of a people must also be reckoned as one of the important factors

<sup>32</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 99, a. 2, reply to obj. 2. Also, *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. VII, l. 5; and *Quaestiones Disputatae de Malo*: q. 15, a. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. I, l. 1. Also, Deploige, *op. cit.*, p. 332 ff.

<sup>34</sup> *In Libros Politicorum*: b. I, l. 1. Also, *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. VII, l. 5.

in the advance of culture. It is a commonplace observation that the moral habits of individuals are both infectious and interactive. From this principle arises the value of good example as well as the necessity of avoiding acts of a scandalous nature.<sup>35</sup> More significant and fundamental, however, is the relation that obtains between good morals and good human legislation. "Law," says St. Thomas,

is framed as a rule or measure of human acts. Now a measure should be one in kind with the thing that it measures, since different things are measured by different standards. For this reason, the laws that are imposed on men should be in keeping with their condition. For, as Isidore says in his *Etymologiae* (v: 21) law should be "possible both in respect to nature and in respect to the customs of the country." But, a possibility or faculty of action is due to an interior habit or disposition; wherefore, the same thing is not possible to one who is lacking in virtue, as to one who possesses such a habit. For instance: a child is not able to do the things that a full grown man does: and so the law for children is not the same as the law for adults, since many things are permitted to children which in an adult are punishable by law or at any rate are open to censure. In like manner, many things are permissible to men who are not yet perfect in virtue that would be intolerable in a perfectly good man.<sup>36</sup>

By juridical environment we mean the social and political regime under which a man lives. The cultural significance of such a surround is expressed by the Angelic Doctor in several places. A few texts will suffice.

Just as the physician does not look at the problem of health in the abstract only, but also considers it in relation to this or that particular patient . . . so the political ruler is not merely concerned with the form of government that is absolutely the best, but also takes cognizance of actual historical circumstances, so as to judge properly the form that is suitable and practicable for a given people.<sup>37</sup>

And in the same text he adds:

<sup>35</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 34, a. 1. Also, p. II-II, q. 43.

<sup>36</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 96, a. 2. Cf. *Contra Gentiles*: b. III, c. III; and *In Libros Ethicorum*: b. I, l. 3.

<sup>37</sup> *In Libros Politicorum*: b. IV, l. 1.

It is quite impossible to establish identical laws for a popular state (democracy) and for a regime that is controlled by the few (aristocracy); neither are the same laws suitable to all the modes in which government by the few is operated.

From this St. Thomas concludes that with a change of politics, a change in the pattern of legislation inevitably follows.

The judicial precepts established by men retain their binding force constantly so long as the state of government remains the same. But if the state or nation pass to another form of government, the laws must be changed. Thus, a democracy, which is government by the people, demands laws that are different from those of an oligarchy, which is government by the rich.<sup>38</sup>

It is obvious that Aquinas was aware of what is called the *historical moment* in culture changes. Even individuals, within the span of a lifetime, experience such moments. Thus, there is a great deal of difference between the inexperience and rash enthusiasm of youth and the mellowed prudence of old age.

Prudence is rather in the old, not only because their natural disposition has a calming effect on the animal passions, but also because of their long experience.

Yet, some men never appear to get control over their feelings. Such is the person

who never grows up in morality and fails of his goal which is right moral conduct. His deficiency, in this case, is not due to time, but rather to the fact that he gives free reign to his emotions and follows the whims of his concupiscent nature.<sup>39</sup>

#### V. THE SUBJECT OF CULTURE

Errors of the gravest nature have been committed about the subject of culture; that is to say, about the persons or moral beings who are the legitimate heirs, custodians, and propagators of the goods of culture. Among the ancient pagans, such goods were commonly denied to foreigners, servants,

<sup>38</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 104, a. 3, reply to obj. 2. Also, *In Libros Politicorum*: b. IV, l. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. I, l. 3. Cf. *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 47, a. 15, reply to obj. 2.

and women. Modern pagan nations exhibit the same exclusiveness. The difference here is simply one of historical setting. The concept of supermen, exempt from all law and obligation, trampling upon the rabble and rejoicing in the havoc they have wrought, is as old as the Egyptian tyrants and as new as the Prussian oligarchs. In basic opponency to such oligarchism, St. Thomas teaches that every man is at once the subject of natural rights and the object of christian charity. Hence, no human being is to be deprived of the advantages of culture or excluded from its goods, unless he be too immature to appreciate them or too vicious to deserve them. Women, like men, have been created in the image and likeness of God. They communicate in the rational nature which has been conferred upon the human race.<sup>40</sup> So, too, with the other members of the human family—foreigners, bondsmen, servants. The essential benefits of culture are to be shared by everybody, each according to his status in life.

One man may be bound to obey another in works that have to be done externally by means of the body; yet, because all men are equal in nature, one man is not obligated to another in matters touching the nature of the body: for example, in things that relate to the support of the body or to the begetting of children. Hence, servants are not bound to obey their masters, or children their parents, when it is a question of contracting marriage or of remaining in a state of virginity, or any other decision of a like character.<sup>41</sup>

Further, in regard to people whose cultural level is low and primitive, St. Thomas is a stout defender of natural rights. Such people may be ill-instructed and even grossly ignorant of principles that pertain to the natural law. They may be sinners and enemies of one's nation. Yet, they are to be considered as rightful subjects of justice and worthy of our benevolence.<sup>42</sup>

Culture, we said at the outset, is a perfection that is socially

<sup>40</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 93, a. 4, reply to obj. 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 104, a. 5. Also, p. III, q. 52, a. 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 94, aa. 4 and 6. Also, p. II-II, q. 25, aa. 1, 6, and 8; q. 58, a. 11. Also, p. III, q. 54, a. 3, reply to obj. 2. Also, *In Libros Politicorum*: b. I, l. 1. Also, *In Ethicam Nichomacheam*: b. VII, l. 5.



possessed. This means that the subjects of the goods of culture are societies as well as individuals. The very notion of culture would imply this, since it designates a good that is commonly shared by the world at large or by a race or community and often through a long period of history. Neither is this common good a matter of summing the goods of particular individuals.

The common good of a polity and the particular good of a person do not differ by much and little only, but also by a formal difference. As a matter of fact, the notion of common good differs from the notion of individual good just as much as the notion of whole differs from the notion of part.<sup>43</sup>

#### VI. THE ESSENTIAL DYNAMISM OF CULTURE

Total culture, like the moral perfection which is an integral part of it, must be constantly on the march. This is the price it must pay for being a living phenomenon and essentially perfectible. If it is not progressing, it is slipping back. The prognosis for present-day cultural ills shows a wide diversity of attitudes among philosophers and historians. The optimists contend that forward movement is an inevitable law of human nature: that by a psychological necessity the human race is constantly improving itself. The pessimists deny practically any development. Particularly would they refuse to grant any advances in the moral goods of culture. The problem is of capital moment and one that St. Thomas thought about most earnestly. That he held for the gradual improvement of the human race and admitted at least a moderate progress in cultural phenomena is beyond question or doubt.

First of all, the notion of advancement from a state of imperfection to one of relative excellence is frequently stressed in his writings. He asks, for example, if there is ground for changing human laws in the course of time. His reply is affirmative on two counts: first, from the standpoint of human reason; second, from the consideration of the changing historical con-

<sup>43</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 58, a. 7, reply to obj. 2.

text against which human nature operates. Thus, "it seems natural to human reason to advance by stages from the imperfect to the perfect"; and again, "law can be rightly changed on account of the altered conditions of man, to whom different things are expedient according to differences in his status."<sup>44</sup> Moreover, "a thing is not brought to perfection at once and from the very beginning but rather through the orderly progress of time. So, one is first a child and then a man."<sup>45</sup>

Such historical progress is verified in the theoretic as well as in the practical dimensions of human achievement.

In the speculative knowledges, we observe that the teachings of the older philosophers were imperfect and that their doctrines were made more perfect by men who followed. So, too, in practical matters: those who first tried to invent things of use to the human community, not being able by themselves to take everything into consideration, set up institutions that were defective in many ways; and these were changed by subsequent lawmakers who erected institutions that would prove less defective in regard to the common weal.<sup>46</sup>

From the study of the ancients St. Thomas could discern a double advantage: on the one hand, the inheritance of precious truths which these early thinkers were able to discover by unaided reason; on the other, the discrimination of errors into which they lapsed through no fault, perhaps, except their immaturity and early historical position in the line of philosophic development.<sup>47</sup>

Moral progress and moral corruption are part of the pattern of human history. Here the views of Aquinas coincide with those of Augustine:

If people have a sense of moderation and responsibility and are careful guardians of the common weal, it is right to enact a law that

<sup>44</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 97, a. 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 106, a. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 97, a. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *In de Anima*: b. I, l. 2. Cf. P. Manser: *Die Wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeit des hl. Thomas von Aquin*, in *Divus Thomas*: 1923, pp. 218-32. Also, M. Grabmann: *Thomas of Aquin*, translated by Virgil Michel, New York, Longmans, Green, 1928, pp. 40-44.

allows such people to choose their own magistrates for the government of the commonwealth. But if, as time goes on, the same people become so corrupt as to sell their votes and entrust their government to scoundrels and criminals, then the right of electing their public officials is justly forfeit to them and the power of choice devolves upon a few good men.<sup>48</sup>

Yet the possibility of a constant moral progression is explicitly recognized by St. Thomas:

The purpose of human law is to lead men to virtue, not suddenly but by degrees. Hence it does not impose on the generality of mankind the task of abstaining from all evil since this is a burden that only those accomplished in virtue can carry. Otherwise, the imperfect citizens, who are unable to fulfill such a precept, would lapse into still greater evils. As it is written in the Book of Proverbs (c. 30) "He that violently bloweth his nose, bringeth out blood"; and in Matthew (c. 9) if "new wine," which is figurative of the precepts of a perfect life, is "put into old bottles," that is, into imperfect men, "the bottles break and the wine runneth out"; that is to say, the precepts are despised, and those already very imperfect, moved by contempt, will surely break out into evils of a more serious nature.<sup>49</sup>

The changeable character of human lawmaking is often referred to in the teaching of St. Thomas. The clearest proof of such mutability is to be found in historical experience. "We see that ancient laws were very simple and even barbaric in form, irrational in conception and extraneous in their objectives. . . . Apparently, primitive men were lacking in prudential judgment and ignorant; and so it appears most unseemly that anyone (nowadays) should be forced to abide by such laws and statutes."<sup>50</sup> As Cicero tells us in the second book of his *Rhetorica*: the beginning of all law must be traced to nature itself. Next, certain forms of legislation arose from considerations of utility. Finally, both the laws springing from

<sup>48</sup> *De Libero Arbitrio*: b. I, c. 6. Quoted by St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 97, a. 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 96, a. 2, reply to obj. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *In Libros Politicorum*: b. II, l. 11. Cf. *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 93, a. 2; q. 94, a. 5; q. 96, a. 2.

nature and the laws based on utility were sanctioned by fear and religion.<sup>51</sup>

The advance made by the Mosaic law over the law of nature is a case in point of human progress.<sup>52</sup> And within the period over which the Mosaic Law exerted its influence, variations in the moral conduct of the Jewish people are to be noted. The same phenomenon is witnessed in the New Law, which represents the highest ideal of the good life humanity has ever known. As St. Thomas sums it up:

The state of the world may change in two respects: first, by a change of law; and from this point of view, no other state will succeed the state of the New Law, since the state of the New Law succeeded the state of the Old Law as a more perfect law succeeds a less perfect one. . . . Secondly, by a change in regard to one and the same law according as it is lived more or less perfectly. Thus the state of the Old Law underwent many changes, since at times the laws were well kept and at other times were completely disregarded. So, too, the state of the New Law is subject to change in regard to variation of times, places, and persons, as the grace of the Holy Ghost abides in a man more or less perfectly.<sup>53</sup>

If the christian dispensation is an improvement over the law of Moses, *a fortiori* it is superior to any purely pagan culture. This is particularly the case with ethical principles, regarding which there were many false notions among the gentiles. St. Thomas points to the christianizing of the sexual impulses as an example of true progress. The ethics of womanhood and property rights, the sanctification of person and the counselled altruism of love are further instances of christian advances over pagan ideals.<sup>54</sup> It is a fact, however, that among the adherents of the Catholic faith, there have been lapses as well as forward motions in matters of morality, as we pointed out a moment ago. Christianity is no guarantee of culture if its followers are false to its principles.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 91, a. 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 98, a. 6.

<sup>53</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 106, a. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. e. g. the views of Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 94, a. 4. Also, p. III, supplement, q. 65, a. 3.



## VII. THE VALUE AND END OF CULTURE

The prophets of pessimism see little or no hope for human culture. With them St. Thomas would not agree. For him, the cause of culture is human nature, tending towards goods that perfect it in the acquisition of knowledge, in the cultivation of moral habits, in the conquest of the forces of physical nature. He is perfectly aware of the effects of original sin which manifest themselves in the inherent laziness of men and in their strong predilection for evil pleasures. Yet, he staunchly maintains that the human intellect is naturally designed to recognize truth and that error is only incidental to it.<sup>55</sup> He is also a firm defender of the natural tendency of man towards good. So true is this that when a person chooses an evil course of action he always does so under some aspect of goodness.<sup>56</sup> Culture, therefore, cannot be blamed if men decline into evil ways. At most, it can furnish only an occasion for the false pretences that drag men down, in its name, to bestial levels of luxury.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, culture must not be apotheosized to the point where it is worshipped as the summit of goodness, the highest goal of human striving, the ultimate norm of all morality. Here Aquinas is adamant.

There is no goal of human living that is not subordinated to God, Who, alone, can be the absolutely ultimate end of human culture. He alone is goodness without reserve. Hence, everything that man does is directed, in its last analysis, to God as to his highest good and final end.<sup>58</sup> The supernatural destiny of man, which is the vision of the Divine Essence, does not prevent him from having a natural destiny, which is earthly happiness; but the temporal end is subordinated to the eternal. If cultural happiness, therefore, is one of man's terrestrial goals, it is subject to the providential movement of God who directs all things finally to Himself.

<sup>55</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 85, a. 6.

<sup>56</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 82, a. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 49, a. 1. Also, p. I-II, q. 75, a. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 1, a. 7, reply to obj. 2; q. 26, a. 2, reply to obj. 2. Also, p. I-II, q. 1, a. 8.

As for the goal of culture itself, a distinction must be drawn between the end of the worker and the end of the work.<sup>59</sup> And so we have to differentiate between the thing which man, in his cultural efforts, intends to secure; and the thing to which culture, by its very nature and in the Wisdom of the Creator, is ordained. What man intends or should intend is his natural happiness and his supernatural beatitude. Every man desires happiness; and when this craving is analyzed in its ultimate implications, it is seen to resolve itself into a craving for union with God. Hence, as St. Thomas teaches, everything that man desires, he desires under the aspect of beatitude, whether he realizes it or not.<sup>60</sup> It is a property of human nature that man, in distinction to the animals, is able to recognize the object of his happiness and to ordain himself to this happiness. The irrational creature, on the other hand, is determined by its instincts to the happiness which it can naturally secure.<sup>61</sup> Thus, in all his operable tasks man employs his rational faculty and his power of choice: to the end that he may produce a culture that is specifically his own.<sup>62</sup>

Now the goods in which man naturally seeks his happiness are the operations that are suitable to his human nature.<sup>63</sup> Though capable of being performed with an eye to eternity, many of these operations pertain immediately to the order of his earthly existence and are properly classified as goods of culture.<sup>64</sup>

But all goods, including those of the cultural order, are ordained to man's final happiness, to which he may order even the actions that are performed out of a spirit of good humor, conviviality, pleasure and relaxation.<sup>65</sup> For, it is not allowable

<sup>59</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. II-II, q. 141, a. 6, reply to obj. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 19, aa. 1 and 10; q. 60, a. 2; q. 82, aa. 1 and 2; q. 83, a. 1, reply to obj. 5. Also, p. I-II, q. 1, a. 6; q. 3, a. 6, reply to obj. 2; q. 5, a. 4; q. 10, aa. 1 and 2; q. 13, a. 6.

<sup>61</sup> *Contra Gentiles*: b. III, c. 112.

<sup>62</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 9, a. 1, reply to obj. 2; q. 21, a. 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 3, a. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I, q. 62, a. 1. Also, p. I-II, q. 3, a. 5 and a. 6, reply to obj. 2; q. 4, a. 7. Also, p. II-II, q. 186, a. 3, reply to obj. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 1, q. 6, reply to obj. 1.

to man to place his goal in this life or to fixate on the goods of earth as though these were his ultimate end: because the final beatitude of the rational creature simply cannot be secured in this life.<sup>66</sup> The particular ends that he may set up for himself are ordered to a more common end and finally to the supreme end, which is God.<sup>67</sup>

Hence, for the Angelic Doctor human culture receives its moral dignity not only from the law of nature but also from the law of christian revelation. This moral dignity it retains and expands precisely because it is conceived and executed with a view to eternity, being designed for the greater honor and glory of God. The goal of all energizing in created nature is to exhibit a dynamic image of the perfection of the Creator, and, by participation in His excellence, to be assimilated to Him. Through his active use of culture, man has at his command a special tool for bringing him closer to his Creator. This human assimilation to God is effected in the several ways that we have already analyzed: by the development of knowledge, morality and the arts, all of which are perfections of man's rational powers; by the proper use of material goods over which he acquires a more perfect dominion from day to day as his knowledge of nature is applied to production; by the growth of peaceful intercourse with his fellow men; and, in the case of nations of men, by pacts of justice and charity that will guarantee tranquility of order.

St. Thomas sums up the whole problem of the end of human culture in a passage filled with the savor of angelic wisdom:

We observe that in the course of nature, the intellectual creature uses all other creatures for its own purposes: either to perfect its intellectual faculty, which sees truth in them as in a mirror; or to exercise its power and develop its knowledge, as when the craftsman gives outward expression to his ideas by incorporating them in matter; or to sustain the body which, in man's case, is united to an intellectual soul.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 2; q. 91, a. 4.

<sup>67</sup> *Summa Theologica*: p. I-II, q. 1, a. 6; q. 2, a. 8; q. 21, a. 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Contra Gentiles*: b. III, c. 112.

It appears quite evident, then, that St. Thomas has many things to teach us about the philosophy of culture which he quite manifestly understood in all its essential principles. True, such principles are not expounded by him from a strictly cultural point of view; yet the very other-world perspective in which he discusses their meaning for the christian way of life makes them all the more valuable and significant today. For if modern materialism is not to swallow up entirely what is left of humanistic worth in our cultural history, it will be because we have recaptured the supernatural medium in which alone our culture can thrive and progress. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Matthew: c. 6.*



# TO BE—THAT IS THE ANSWER

By EMMANUEL CHAPMAN

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## I. THE STATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: ITS SICKNESS AND RENEWAL

IN the first quarter of this century—the century of progress you will remember—philosophy, and society too, were in quite a moribund condition. Both Scholastic and non-Scholastic philosophy, to use a highly convenient but unphilosophical division, were in an ailing state. Among the so-called “neo-Scholastics,” notwithstanding the rousing calls of Leo XIII and some of his successors, the ghost of Descartes had not yet been fully exorcised by the real St. Thomas. The Cartesian-infected hybrid, which kept to itself, was not feared by the non-Scholastic or, more precisely, the anti-Scholastic philosophers, most of whom were slumbering dogmatically in the shadows still cast by Kant and Comte.

Though the bachelor of Koenigsberg had long since gone to his rest convinced that he had succeeded in finally sterilizing metaphysics as positive knowledge and relegating it to the sphere of transcendental illusions, metaphysical monsters continued to be begotten. The acid of Kantian criticism did its damage: instead of digesting experience, criticism was feeding upon itself.

Some of Comte’s followers, on the other hand, fastened themselves upon the success of the sciences of nature, from the leavings of which they hoped to do a lively business. Others doted on the younger social sciences. These positivists were not content with guarding jealously the sciences of phenomena. Against *whom*, one wonders. For philosophy could only benefit by being relieved of the task it was not fit to do, and so too could religion. They vehemently sought to destroy any kind of knowing which was not in conformity with that of the empirical sciences. The positivists were so intent upon denying philoso-

phy that they failed to perceive the incongruity of how their very denial affirmed it. This could be likened, if it were not for the more serious consequences, to the stock comedy situation from which movie audiences used to get such a laugh, in which someone was pictured blithely denying a danger, say a ferocious bear, while unknown to him it advanced behind his back.

A new promise for philosophy, however, was beginning to stir in the early works of Husserl in Germany, and Bergson in France. Across the Atlantic, William James hailed enthusiastically the philosopher of the *élan vital* for having emancipated him from logic.

Such, in brief, was the state of philosophy when Jacques Maritain's first philosophical work, a critical study of Bergson, appeared a year before the outbreak of World War I. By comparing it with his two essays on Bergson in *Ransoming the Time*, written twenty-seven years later, in the second year of World War II, the internal development of Maritain's thought can be measured. But tempting as the pleasure would be of tracing this progression in depth and width, it will be sacrificed here. Conscious of the contribution of Maritain and a few others, some of whom are not Scholastics, this essay is concerned with showing how philosophy is restored to health by being brought into living contact with the real, and how, by no longer being separated from every source of life and experience, either above or below it, philosophy becomes again the full intellectual activity of the whole man confronting the whole of experience.

## II. EMPIRICISM FEELS ITSELF CHALLENGED BY SCHOLASTICISM

The renewal of philosophy, naturally expected in the *philosophia perennis*, the common philosophy worked out collectively through the centuries, is also affecting those varieties which have diverted themselves from the main stream. Only recently, for example, one of the more enlightened exponents of empiricism called upon his fellow-empiricists to purify their own philosophy in order to meet the challenge of Scholasticism. Anyone concerned with truth will sympathize with the courage-

ous criticism of Professor Charles W. Morris, who points out that the empiricist "remains his own worst enemy," and shows that "he has not merely himself failed to round out his own life, but he has often seemed to belittle, to restrain, to frustrate those forms of human activity in the arts and religion which, in a purified form, he should encourage and release. It is a serious question whether the empiricist can rise to the contemporary challenge and crisis."<sup>1</sup>

The personal shortcomings of the empiricist should not be blamed for the failure of empiricism, which is intrinsically a self-frustrating philosophy. Its attempt to defend itself, culture, and religion, tried before by Comte and others, has failed, and must by its very nature always fail, as the history of philosophy is there to show if it is understood philosophically. This failure, however, does not make this new attempt any the less significant. Its self-criticism is all to the good, and it may some day correct itself sufficiently to deliver the half-truths held captive by it.

The empiricist is exhorted by Professor Morris to meet the challenge which he sees in Scholasticism: "The empiricist should boldly accept this challenge. . . . It is not enough that he limit his activities to the formulation and confirmation of scientific statements in the special fields of science. He must question the analyses of contemporary culture with which he is confronted and in terms of which he is damned; he must attack the metaphysical super-structure which his opponents graft upon the edifice he so laboriously and cautiously erects. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Were the empiricist to learn that Scholasticism does not make even the slightest pretence of basing itself upon the latest conclusions of the empirical sciences, he might have to look elsewhere for an opponent. It would be to his advantage, however, were he to examine first his naive assumption that the philosophical empiricist and the scientist are identical, which is certainly not the case. He might also cease presupposing,

<sup>1</sup> "Empiricism, Religion, and Democracy," Charles W. Morris, in *Science, Philosophy, and Religion* (Second Symposium). New York: 1942, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

without demonstrating, what is by no means self-evident, namely, that the only valid knowledge is the knowledge of the empirical sciences. Yet if he does feel challenged by Scholasticism, should he not, in accordance with his professed empiricism, get to know what it really is, and not spend his energies shadow-boxing with a hollow caricature?

### III. THE CHALLENGE WITHIN SCHOLASTICISM

Far from feeling superior or complacent that empiricism finds it necessary to strengthen itself in order to meet the challenge of Scholasticism—can one really be complacent or superior in possessing truth, and not suffer with those who are in error?—should not the Scholastics examine their own philosophical conscience? Are they not much to blame for their failure to make Scholasticism better understood by their contemporaries? This failure is due not only to their deficiencies of communication, for the causes go much deeper. In getting at some of these causes, Scholastic philosophy will have to acquire a more explicit knowledge of itself, and by so doing rid itself of false accretions, and release its further potentialities of growth. Now that philosophy has long since lost its original innocence, and is, if anything, too highly self-conscious, the lack of a proper consciousness of itself on the part of Scholastic philosophy would be a serious shortcoming. May this not account partly for the different versions among the Scholastics themselves as to what Scholastic philosophy is?

All of them would not accept its characterization, still given by some of them, as "both a system and a method." They would deny, in the first place, that Scholasticism is a system in the sense in which this word is usually understood. Indeed, the very notion of a closed system is a negation of the true nature of philosophy. Witness to this are the wrecks, to which some truths still cling, of the rationalistic constructions of Descartes, Spinoza, Hegel, and others, which could not withstand the rising waves of reality beating against their closed doors. Scholastic philosophy, it need hardly be added, can rescue some of the truths still clinging to the magnificent ruins



of the methodical system-builders of philosophy. If the term method can still be applied to philosophy, even after it is purified of the meanings given to it by Descartes, then the "method" of Scholasticism is not to ossify into the rigidity of a system, but to keep itself organically open to further explorations of reality, in fresh contact with, and philosophically alive to, all things.

Some Scholastics would disagree even more strongly with those of its adherents who still mistakenly give as a characteristic of the "method" of Scholasticism, "*its preoccupation with logic, deduction, system, and its literary form of syllogistic argumentation.*"<sup>3</sup> This, they would rightly insist, is a most apt description of decadent Scholasticism. No other philosophy has distinguished more sharply between the logical and ontological orders: the unreal, mental being of logic arrived at by a total abstraction, a blanket-like and contentless abstraction of being as the widest class, greatest in extension and least in comprehension; and the real being both actual and possible with which philosophy concerns itself, arrived at through an abstractive intuition, much deeper than the formal abstractions on the physical and mathematical levels, which penetrates into the most essential features of being. What is grasped, implicitly at first, and simultaneously, in the metaphysical intuition of being, is so rich in ontological content that all the conceptualizations by which metaphysics renders it explicit can never be exhaustive.

Being and its first principles, as well as the self-evident first principles of the intellect, are seen intuitively by the intellect, which acquires a progressively deeper understanding of them, and by them. They are not deduced, or induced, as this is usually understood in the sense given to it by empirical logic, but are seen abstractively in one concrete instance or embodiment. Neither are they *a priori*, or *a posteriori*, as this division is commonly used. Because they are transcendental, that is, common to all that is, and not confined to any one class, the

<sup>3</sup> "Scholasticism," H. G., p. 281, *The Dictionary of Philosophy, Philosophical Library*, New York: 1942.

first principles of being cannot be defined. Neither can they be demonstrated, for what is self-evident does not require demonstration. These most superficial remarks concerning them should at least suggest the metaphysical fecundity of these first principles. Philosophical thought moves not only horizontally from the particular to the most general, as is usually supposed, but also vertically to greater depths of more determinate and distinct intelligibility.

No Scholastic, nor any healthy mind for that matter, can fail to assent to the first principles of being and thought, but some Scholastics are not sufficiently aware of how a first principle has a radically different meaning and function in their philosophy from that, say, in any idealist system. Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, for example, is a first principle because everything else in his philosophy is supposed to be deduced from it with mathematical rigor. It is obvious how this differs in every way from the role of a first principle in Scholastic realism. At the slightest idealistic touch, the first principles of being and thought wither up. Torn from their ontological soil, which alone can nourish them, these living roots shrivel into the emptiness of the unreal, mental being of logic. This idealist blight, unfortunately, has contaminated most of the textbooks of Scholastic philosophy in use in Catholic colleges. Is it any wonder, then, that no harvest has been reaped?

Genuine exponents of Scholastic philosophy, furthermore, would object to the statement, that it is "*directly and immediately subordinated to theology*."<sup>4</sup> Without the necessary qualifications, such a characterization puts it in an entirely false light and can bring only further misunderstandings. In its sphere, philosophy is not a handmaid but its own mistress, independent in its principles, and even more secure in its work of reason because it knows that its rational truths, arrived at in its own way, cannot be in contradiction to the truths of faith. Philosophy is a handmaid only in the sphere of theology, higher than philosophy in its content but not in its mode of knowing, because it is employed there in making explicit what is con-

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

tained implicitly in the revealed data of faith. Faith, it will be remembered, has a twofold content: certain truths infinitely above man's reason, bearing on what God is in His own nature; and certain truths which human reason could obtain by its own light but never did, in fact, without an admixture of error before they were revealed, as the existence of God and some of the divine attributes.

Though philosophy has benefited in its own work of reason from the light of revealed truth illuminating man's darkness in such matters, the fact that so much of Scholastic philosophy was unfolded within a theological context has had certain consequences which can easily turn into disadvantages if they are not given sufficient attention. As was to be expected from the theological setting in which they were brought forth, many of the philosophical truths of Scholasticism are delivered much too rapidly, for sacred theology glances swiftly at the created things which it looks at in the light of the revealed heights of God. These truths require a fuller elaboration in an organic philosophical body, really distinct from the theological matrix in which they were first unfolded. Unlike theology, philosophy pays a different kind of attention, and puts other questions, to things which are its starting point: it lingers with them much longer, listens attentively to all their creaturely articulations, patiently explores them in its own light, and slowly ascends to the divine heights. Having come of age, and truly conscious of itself, Scholastic philosophy should no longer seek to be carried in the arms of theology. One of the disastrous consequences resulting from a failure to exercise its proper independence would be the atrophy of its own philosophical legs and its organs of growth and further development.

Regimentation, of course, in Scholastic philosophy would be unwelcome, for as in any living adventure of the mind this would mean death. But there should be certain basic agreements, without which there cannot be creative differences, not on a number of conclusions—for philosophy is not a body of conclusions—but on certain fundamental principles, from which these and constantly new consequences flow. Scholastic phi-

losophy, from within, challenges its holders to re-examine its principles and see more deeply into them.

#### IV. THE THOMISTIC REVOLUTION

*"The senses indeed do not know existence, except under the conditions of here and now, whereas the intellect apprehends existence absolutely, and for all time. . . ."*<sup>5</sup>

Not everyone who speaks in the name of Scholasticism truly represents it, and even among the Scholastics there are those who cannot distinguish its genuine expression from the neo-Aristotelianism promoted in its name. The daring innovations of St. Thomas, the greatest of the Scholastics, are so hidden behind the language of Aristotle that they remain hidden even to this day, and many still fail to see the radical differences between the two. This is all the more reason why creative Thomists are impelled to translate St. Thomas's original insights into a more appropriate language. In this way they are continuing to develop the philosophy of the Schoolmen—those who taught in the great centers of learning when the university was still organically linked with the vital currents of society, and whose philosophy, which had a long history before and after St. Thomas gave it such unique expression, may be properly called Scholastic, if by that is meant its openness to learn from all of reality and from the great teachers who transmit it. Some Thomists would fail to see the real St. Thomas in the learned article on Aquinas recently published by one of his followers, and they would disagree with the assertion that "To be an Aristotelian under such circumstances was the problem St. Thomas set himself."<sup>6</sup> The fact that St. Thomas used the ready-made Aristotelian language of essence to express his unique metaphysical intuition of existence has prevented many from detecting the revolution effected by him. With St. Thomas, philosophy for the first time in its long history was able to reach deeper than the level of inextinguishable essences to the fathomless undercurrents of existence irradiated by them.

<sup>5</sup> *Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 75, Art. 6, c.

<sup>6</sup> "Aquinas, Thomas," A. C. P., p. 16, *The Dictionary of Philosophy*.



Though expressed in Aristotle's language, St. Thomas's five-fold proof for the existence of God is rooted in the deeper plane of existence penetrated by his philosophical intelligence. The first proof is concerned not with abstract motion reaching to the Aristotelian unmoved mover, a thought thinking itself, (could anyone ever pray to such an abstraction?), but with the existence of motion, the actuality of that which is in potentiality, starting from which the intellect rises to an unmoved mover who is I AM WHO AM, who is existence itself, self-existence by essence in all its illimitable plenitude. The four other interrelated proofs, or rather the other ways of the one and the same fundamental proof, also move on the plane of existence into which they go more and more deeply. The second goes from causal efficiency, or the existential action with which beings are empowered, to the existing source from which all causal efficacy flows; the third, the center of them all, goes from contingent existence to a necessary self-existence; the fourth proceeds from the degrees of the perfections of existence, goodness, truth, and other perfections, to an absolutely perfect existence; the fifth from the order inviscerated in existence to an intelligent being, who by communicating existence communicates order and all the co-ingredients that go with existence. By starting with the contingent existence held so precariously by essences, the intellect can laboriously rise by the way of causality, which makes sense only if it is understood as a communication of existence, to a necessary self-existence. Though St. Thomas placed much higher the experiential awareness of God as He is in Himself, attained in the authentic mystical experience, and immediately below this the knowledge of God as He revealed Himself, which is the object of sacred theology, he appreciated the true worth of the philosophical proofs which are the humble work of reason in demonstrating the existence of God. The more brilliant evidence which he possessed in the mystical experience, and as a theologian, never tempted him to disparage the less brilliant evidence which reason manages to see after its laborious efforts.

St. Thomas's existential perspective enabled him to bring

into the most intimate unity what he distinguished so sharply but did not separate, the essentially different activities of philosophy and theology. Each of these had sought to swallow up the other before St. Thomas's genius taught these fierce energies to live together harmoniously and mutually benefit one another in man, their concrete subject of operation. These distinct activities are exercised by the whole man, in whom a vital synergy is established between the interacting natural and infused intellectual gifts, habitus, and also the moral virtues. Though radically distinct in the order of essence, or specification, there is a living interchange in the order of existence or exercise between the different wisdoms, sciences, and arts, and such is their existential interflow and solidarity that if one suffers they all suffer, and the good of one affects the good of all. Thus, for example, when later the empiriological sciences, distinguished in principle by St. Thomas and prepared for in a subtle way by his having oriented the intellect towards existence, came into being, they had to tear themselves away violently from the decadent philosophy which stupidly tried to hinder them in their growth, not, however, without injury both to science and philosophy.

The whole of St. Thomas's philosophy flows from the simple, yet inexhaustible, metaphysical intuition, seen through the transparency of concepts but which can never be fully conceptualized, that *to be* means the act of existence (actual or possible) of an essence, the primordial energy whereby it stands outside of its causes, infinitely opposed to nothingness, the innermost first principle of a thing, the act by which a thing is undivided or *one*, adequate to an intellect or *true*, desirable in itself and to others or *good*, delectably apprehensible or *beautiful*, a first subject of existence or *substantial*, existing in another or *accidental*, communicating existence to others or a *cause*.

The philosophical awareness of existence opens the intellect to the metaphysical drama of how beings composed of essence and existence, potentiality and actuality, and, if they are material, form and matter, struggle to realize themselves more fully

in existence by achieving more unity, truth, goodness, beauty, substantiality, and accident, while at the same time resisting the pull towards non-being, multiplicity, falsity, evil, and ugliness. Even at the successful conclusion of this drama, the gap between essence and existence branding all contingent beings will not be completely overcome, and will point to the Being whose essence is existence, self-subsisting act, absolute unity, truth, goodness, beauty, and all else that He is infinitely.

In the light of this philosophical perception of the irreducible value of existence as the highest perfection of any reality, the analogy of being discloses itself. Existence is proportioned to the essences in which it is realized: contingent or necessary existence, relative or absolute, changing or permanent, material or spiritual, individual or social, created or uncreated, finite or infinite, etc. The diversity of beings is not obliterated univocally by the sterile monism of materialism, idealism or pantheism, which chokes out all differences. Nor is reality pulverized by a radical pluralism. The analogical recognition rises from the lowliest existence to the highest, and in encompassing all existence respects differences and at the same time relates everything in a proportional unity.

All the profound answers given by St. Thomas to the persistent questions of philosophy came from his unique, philosophical perception of existence. The mystery of the cognitive act whereby the mind is all the more itself in being, or intentionally becoming, the other, as other, can be appreciated only from the standpoint of existence. In the incandescent interchange of the act of knowing, there is an identity between the mind knowing and the thing known, and at the same time a radical disconformity in the mode of existence of the same essence in the mind and in reality: in its natural existence in reality, the essence exists concretely, individually, and, if it is a material thing, materially; in its intentional existence in the mind, the same thing exists abstractly, under the conditions of universality, immaterially. The issue between nominalism and exaggerated realism on the problem of how man's intellectual knowledge through universal ideas conforms to indi-

vidual things, as well as the other fundamental questions in epistemology, are resolved by the philosophical recognition of existence and its different modes as really distinct from essence.

The most elementary consideration of the judgment, the more perfect knowledge in which truth is had, brings out even more emphatically the reference to existence, actual or possible. In the preparatory act traditionally called "simple apprehension," essential aspects, whether substantial or accidental, are abstracted from existence, and these intelligible determinations or patterns are seen intuitively by the intellect, through and in its concepts, in the order of signification, as static meanings disengaged or considered apart from existence. Thus, from any one existing thing a multiplicity of objects of thought can be objectivated, and these are present to the intellect as signified intelligibility, apprehended as simple intelligibles uncomposed with existence. What has been torn apart by the intellect, so to speak, in its preparatory act of simple apprehension is restored in the dynamic act of the judgment. In its judgmental act, the intellect moves from the plane of essences into the dimension of existence, not as signified but as exercised, as held by a subject in the life of the mind, or carried on in reality. Thus, for example, in the judgment Maritain is a philosopher; deeper than the level of signification, the two formally different objects of thought signified in the logical subject and predicate are affirmed to be the same in the subject exercising existence in the mind and in reality. The judgment is true, if what the intellect combines or divides is found together or apart in existence, actual or possible, as exercised by a subject, lived in the life of the mind, and also carried on extra-mentally. Reflecting on his judgmental act, man may grasp intuitively, if his intellect is so gifted and can rid itself of certain natural distractions, the exercised, substantial existence of his own soul. This is charged with important consequences which philosophical psychology has yet to explore more fully.

Only from the point of view of existence could St. Thomas resolve successfully the problem of the unity of man, over which Christian thinkers had struggled for more than a thousand years in their effort to reconcile the conflicting elements of the



Platonic soul-as-substance and the Aristotelian soul-as-form heritage. The differences between St. Thomas's and Aristotle's philosophical psychology are hinted at by the respective titles given to their important contributions in this field, Aristotle's treatise on the soul, and St. Thomas's treatise on man. Not the soul, but man, becomes the proper subject matter of philosophical psychology, man's whole nature and all the integrated powers, acts and habits which flow from his soul, substantially united to his bodily matter—the vegetative, locomotive, instinctive, emotional, sense-cognitive, sense-appetitive, intellectual-appetitive, and intellectual-cognitive powers held together undividedly by one act of existence. Because it is spiritual, man's form has such substantiality that it will be able to continue to subsist after it is separated from its body, without which in this life it could not have come into its own operationally, and for which it will continue to long until it is united to the body again, and the human being, the substantial union of the two, is restored. New dimensions of the meaning of personality were also opened. Of all the beings in the material universe, only man is a person, an individual substance of a rational-free nature subsisting as a spiritual whole, possessing its own existence in an absolutely incommunicable way, and communicating through intelligence and love with itself and other persons.

It is also by a genuine existential approach that the deeper answers can be developed to the fundamental questions in ethics and its branches of social and political philosophy. A philosophically adequate ethics cannot enter into its fullness unless it takes into account the nature of man, not in the abstract, but in the existential state and the concrete conditions in which man's nature is exercised. Exploring the existential dimensions in which the essence of man is realized, this more adequate consideration will be profoundly aware of how the essence of man is helped or hindered in its realization by the concrete conditions of existence—the religious, cultural, social, political, economic, etc. This existential approach in social philosophy would be philosophically aware that too great a tension between the essence of society and its existential con-

ditions of realization can result in the breakdown of a particular society. The common good of civil society would be considered both as an essence, formally different from individual goods or their sum total, and existentially as circulating throughout the whole of a given society by flowing to each and all of its members and not being frozen into any one group. Not only would the essence of government be considered, even of the best kind of government, but also its conditions of existential realization. Such a philosophical exploration, not to be confused in any way with an historical examination of different types of government, would have important philosophical consequences, hardly developed as yet in an adequate social philosophy.

With St. Thomas, philosophy for the first time became truly existential, and henceforth had to remain so or lose its very existence. Yet despite Maritain's philosophical contributions and Gilson's historical confirmation, how many Scholastics today understand the true meaning of philosophy's existentialism? This is not to be confused with any of the so-called existential philosophies with their anti-intellectual approaches which attempt to get at reality biologically, emotionally, and in other irrational ways. These extra-philosophical experiences can in no way substitute for the intellectual intuition of being by which the intellect is awakened to a philosophical awareness of the existential dimension of any being: beings that are fully actual and not subject to the torrent of change, as well as those the essences of which have possible existence and are pulled, as it were, by the more powerful energy of actual existence, calling them to the ultimate fulfillment of actuality; and also material beings immersed in the stream of change in which they move towards the realization of their potentialities to fulfillment or destruction.

The metaphysical intuition, with which few philosophers have been gifted, should not be confused with the sensible intuition of being through which the human mind must stoop before gaining entrance into its metaphysical homeland. Every man is endowed with this sensible intuition of being whereby

the intellect through the senses is put in immediate touch with the actual existence concretized in a material thing. The senses can frequently be deceived about the material properties of a thing, or how it exists, yet there can be infallible certainty in the order of sense knowledge about the actual existence of things. To the objection, "But what if you are dreaming that you are actually experiencing things, or are having an hallucination?" the reply, stated in its most simple terms, would be that this very question presupposes the certainty of the knowledge of the actual existence of material things, and the recognition of its difference from a state of dreaming or hallucination. If it were further objected that "We experience not the properties of objects but the properties of our own nervous systems. We can thus have no direct knowledge of reality beyond the symbols that we learn to agree upon with others who have similar nervous systems,"<sup>7</sup> the same reply could be given, that this presupposes that we are certain of the direct knowledge of the actual existence of our nervous system and that of others. Were you to attempt, at the idealist's behest, to prove the existence of the external world, or your own existence, you would be falling into his trap: these are immediately and directly evident and as such cannot be proved, nor do they require proof. The same is true of the indemonstrable, self-evident, first principles of identity and contradiction upon which all demonstration rests. They would have to be used in any attempt to prove them, a contradictory undertaking, and they cannot be denied without at the same time being affirmed. These principles which are first discovered in being before they are translated into the intellect as the first principles of reason, as well as the proximate principle of causality, and the primitive certainty of the actual existence of material things cannot be defended by *common sense*, because it holds them unreflectively and uncritically, but by the philosopher who possesses them consciously and critically.

By reducing to absurdity all who deny them, and showing

<sup>7</sup> "Some Comments on Science and Faith," Hudson Hoagland, in *Science, Philosophy, and Religion* (Second Symposium), p. 35.

how they cannot be denied without at the same time being affirmed, that is, without contradiction, the philosopher defends what is genuine in *common sense*. Once he has purified *common sense* of the false meanings attributed to it, and the irrational prejudices, opinions, and beliefs usually masquerading under its name, the philosopher shows that it refers specifically to the three primal certainties just mentioned, which come into play with the spontaneous use of sense and reason in their native vigor, without any special scientific or philosophical training.

The crude knowledge of genuine *common sense*, charged with ontological densities, unrefined as yet by the special techniques of the empirical and mathematical sciences, must be defended philosophically against both the idealist and the empiricist, who will not admit any knowledge as valid other than what conforms to their own preconceived notions. The philosophy of critical-realism does not dismiss, nor look down upon, but justifies, what is valid in the pre-scientific knowledge of *common sense*. Growing out of *common sense*, but differing radically from it in its mode of knowing, the philosophy which is also a wisdom knows that it will wither at its very roots if it alienates itself from the vital certainties which are the natural endowment of the common man.

The consequences of considering philosophy itself existentially have hardly been glimpsed. To say the least, once aware of its own conditions of existence, philosophy can be master of its own destiny by controlling the factors which hinder or advance it, the internal ones and the social, political, and economic developments with which, though it has its own independence, it is vitally connected. The perennial philosophy by its very nature must be always actual, for what is eternally true must be always freshly present. Not ancient or neo, but current and living, it should be ready to answer the most crucial questions of today. The philosophy in touch with existence has the challenge within itself to deepen and perfect itself, and keep itself in a constant state of renewal.

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# JUSTICE AND FRIENDSHIP<sup>1</sup>

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IT is a commonplace of social and political history that European civilization has come down to us as a heritage from classical antiquity. Everybody repeats, whether to rejoice in the fact or to regret it, that culturally we are Greeks.<sup>2</sup> Not everybody, however, is conscious of the vast difference between the Graeco-Roman culture, to which we owe so much, and the Christian culture of Western Europe, from which we have inherited the most and best of what we still possess of civilized existence.

Before Professor Etienne Gilson published those epoch-making Gifford Lectures on the *Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, how few, even among the learned, were actually aware of the extent to which Christian thought, especially the fully developed Christian philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, had transformed, nay, literally transfigured, the legacy of Greece and Rome!

Few as they were who realized at all vividly the gulf that separated the pagan from the Christian culture of Europe, fewer still were those who had any clear conception of how utterly we moderns have broken with our own traditions and how definitely our contemporaries (not among totalitarian nations alone, be they Fascist, Nazi, or Communist, but among our own people, and in our own lands, as well) have cut their moorings in the Christian past and drifted from the course which classical antiquity and Christian tradition, combined, had set. When the same Professor Gilson published his James

<sup>1</sup> This paper, the substance of which was given as the St. Thomas Aquinas Lecture, 1942, at the College of the Sacred Heart, Manhattanville, was written at the suggestion of M. Jacques Maritain after a long conversation about justice and friendship in the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas.

<sup>2</sup> "... a chorus from Euripides," said Stanley Baldwin, "awakens an echo in our souls, reviving memories which are ancestral." Presidential Address, The Classical Association, London, 1926.

Lectures on the *Unity of Philosophical Experience* and Professor Maritain wrote those penetrating and provocative studies, *The Three Reformers* and *Integral Humanism*, many of their readers began to recognize for the first time that our modern conceptions of human life, human thought, and human culture had thoroughly abandoned the high ideals of civilization which had been laboriously acquired through long centuries of Christian reflection, Christian practice, and Christian prayer.

In this paper I propose briefly to discuss two of these basic concepts, which modern men have either completely lost or distorted beyond all recognition, viz., the concepts of justice and friendship — those two virtues which pagan Greece and pagan Rome regarded as essential to sound social life and which the sublime teachings of Christian revelation, particularly as expressed in the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, transformed into forces of incredible beneficence and elevated to a realm of efficacy transcending, while preserving intact, the whole order of man's temporal social and political life. Our Holy Father the Pope has sadly noted the fact that men no longer understand the true meaning of the words justice, charity, and friendship. The consequence is that our leaders, thinkers, responsible guides, and legitimate rulers are at a loss to find a stable basis upon which the upbuilding of a just and peaceful human order of society could even be envisaged, much less actually accomplished.

It would carry us far afield were we to pause to consider and criticize the aberrations of modern thought upon the subject of these virtues or even to pass in review the various distortions which modern ethicists and social philosophers have wrought upon those fundamental notions of social morality. Rather, I shall attempt briefly to indicate what justice and friendship meant to the Greeks and to point out how St. Thomas Aquinas carried the thought of those great pagan thinkers to heights beyond their loftiest speculation.

Read, if you will, the praise of justice which Socrates pronounces in Plato's dialogue *Gorgias* and in those eloquent dis-

cussions in the first, second, and fourth books of the *Republic*, where Socrates extols justice as the essential virtue of the state, the bond of union among all members of society, and the most proper virtue of man. Justice, says Socrates (and through the voice of Socrates Plato speaks), is compounded of wisdom, temperance, and courage.<sup>3</sup> Through justice men may live in friendship and harmony by virtue of the humane equality it establishes in man's relations with man.<sup>4</sup> In the thought of Plato and of Socrates, justice lies at the very root of social life and organization; while injustice eradicates every vestige of communal life, disrupts the harmony upon which peace depends, degrades the individual and leads to conflict, strife, and social chaos.<sup>5</sup> Listen to the Athenian (no doubt, Plato's ideal man of Athens) who speaks in the Dialogue on the Laws: "Goods," he says, "are of two kinds; there are the human goods and the divine, and the human goods depend upon the divine; and the state which attains the greater at the same time acquires the less, or having not the greater, has neither. Of the lesser goods the first is health, the second beauty, and the third strength; and the fourth is wealth, for Pluto is no blind god provided he has wisdom for his companion. For wisdom is the chief and leader in the divine class of goods and next follows temperance and from the union of these two with courage springs justice."<sup>6</sup> "To justice, he who would be happy holds fast and follows in her company with all humility and order."<sup>7</sup> For justice produces harmony and issues in friendship, that sweet force which "binds together heaven and earth and gods and men and makes a universe which we call Cosmos or order, not disorder or misrule."<sup>8</sup>

Plato's conception of justice is, indeed, sublime; it corresponds more or less accurately to that general condition of the individual soul and the social group which might be described as righteousness. The just man, for Plato, was the virtuous

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Republic* 4. 433.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Gorgias* 508.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Laws* 3, 696 b; 4, 709 E; *Lysis* 214; *Republic* 1. 331; *Laws* 906 A.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Laws* I. 631.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Laws* IV. 715.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Gorgias* 508.

man, the man who lived his life in conformity with the highest norms and standards of truly human existence.<sup>9</sup> Friendship in its truest sense — which for Plato implies justice<sup>10</sup> — is fostered by equality<sup>11</sup> and makes for benevolence towards others accompanied with kindly sentiments and common sympathies; it can therefore exist only among the virtuous.<sup>12</sup> Wickedness or injustice vitiates friendship and ultimately destroys it.<sup>13</sup>

Nowhere in his Dialogues, however, does Plato attempt to give an accurate analysis of justice or assign to it a more precise meaning or function than that of a general condition of virtuous and righteous living. But it is obvious from many passages of his writings that due observance of the proper measure in relation to the rights of one's fellow-man is included in that general condition of virtue which Socrates and Plato call justice.

While Socrates and Plato praised and exalted justice as a general virtue issuing from the cultivation of all that is best in human living and human conduct, Aristotle pursued the course of analysis with a view to determining more precisely the exact nature, role, and function of justice as a special virtue concerned with the rectification of undue inequalities among members of the social group, and for the purpose of setting forth its importance both for the perfection of the individual and for the establishment and maintenance of peace and harmony in society and in the state. Nowhere in the literature of pagan antiquity has the virtue of justice been more keenly examined or more accurately described than in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle and nowhere have the implications of that virtue for social and political life been more thoroughly canvassed than in his treatise on Politics.

In the moral and political philosophy of Aristotle there is a place for the general condition of righteous living which results from the cultivation of all the virtues and which Plato calls

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Republic* 4, 443.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Republic* 1, 351 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Phaedrus* 255.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Lysis* 214 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Lysis* 217 f.; *Phaedrus* 232.



justice. Aristotle sees in it a disposition arising from the due observance of all moral laws and the cultivation of all good habits whose end is the preservation of that happy mean in which virtue consists. Because of its reference to the conforming of life and conduct to the laws of morality, Aristotle gives the technical name of "legal" justice to this universal or common virtue which embraces all virtues and makes for the proper exercise of all one's faculties and powers towards the living of the good life.<sup>14</sup>

Aristotle gives much more attention, however, to the particular virtue of justice which is concerned with rectifying undue inequalities among the members of society and which deals specifically with the exchange of goods between individuals and the fair distribution of honors and burdens among the various members of the community. Commutative justice, by establishing a certain arithmetical equality between the values of things which men need, sets up a standard in which equity in the exchange of goods may be attained and things which are equal in value be traded for equally valuable things.<sup>15</sup> Distributive justice, by establishing a like equality, this time not arithmetical but proportional or geometrical, between the members of the community, lays the foundation for an equitable distribution of the honors and burdens of the common life among the individuals who comprise the group, each receiving his proportionate share in view of his dignity and position in the social order. From this twofold source of equitable dealing arise harmony and proportional equality among men, as from a double root of one fair virtue, which flowers and bears fruit in mutual good feeling, benevolence, and friendship.<sup>16</sup> Essential as is the virtue of justice and the establishment of that equality among members of society upon which fair and equitable communication depends, justice does not *constitute* the social bond which links the members of the community together in practice of their common life. Justice *predisposes*

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Ethics* V. 3, 1129b-1130a.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Ethics* V. 5, 1130b-1131a; V. 6, 1131a.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Ethics* V. 6, 1131a-V. 7, 1131b.

men for friendship and prepares the ground upon which the union of men in mutual affection and benevolence may rise. Friendship is the very soul of society and of the common life;<sup>17</sup> society, indeed, is but another name for the union of men in friendship; and the various kinds of friendship—domestic, civic, professional, educational, commercial, or other—constitute the norm upon which various sorts of societies are organized and conducted and serve to differentiate one society from another.<sup>18</sup> For friendship implies communication in some common good mutually and reciprocally possessed by all those who are friends. And since every good is either a useful good, a delectable good, or a good desirable in its own right and for itself, friendships may arise and societies be established for utilitarian purposes of all sorts, for various purposes of pleasure, or for purely virtuous reasons. In each and all of them there is community of interests, common aims, mutual agreement, reciprocal advantage—in a word, communication in some common good, or *friendship*.<sup>19</sup> Praiseworthy as friendships that arise from communion in useful or delectable goods may be when they pursue utility or pleasure in due moderation and measure, the noblest friendships are those which are centered in the good which is desirable in itself, the common good of man as man. Of such are the natural societies or friendships of the domestic community—the family—and the political community—the state.<sup>20</sup> The love of the home, that is, the friendship among parents and children—the *pietas* of Latin literature and culture, and the love of one's country, patriotism—the love of the *patria*, are the noblest of the friendships men may cherish on this earth.

Friendship, for Aristotle, is indeed a noble virtue. In its purity it is the highest kind of love—the mutual benevolence (well-wishing, well-willing) of man for man, the effective desire of good for one another entertained and reciprocated among human beings. It is an affection (*amatio*) motivated not by the prospect of personal gain or advantage, pleasure or profit, but by desire for the good of those who are our friends and for

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 9, 1158b.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 14, 1161b.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 14, 1161b.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 15, 1162a.

their advantage and prosperity. A friend is as an *alter ego*, another self, and friendship is the love of another as if he were one's very self.<sup>21</sup>

For this reason, friendship can reign only among equals. Equality is essential to it. Friendship is the love of equals for equals. And friendship is the soul of society. Justice is therefore essential to the social order; for without justice equality cannot be established and friendship becomes impossible. Justice, therefore, is a *conditio sine qua non*, a necessary prerequisite, for all unity and harmony and order in society. But when equality is achieved the work of justice is at an end, for the role of justice is to make equals. It belongs to friendship to avail itself of the equality which justice accomplishes. For the ultimate fruit of justice is equality, but equality is only the beginning of friendship.<sup>22</sup>

The equality of which Aristotle speaks, however, is not a mere matter of arithmetic. That is all very well for the establishment of equality between *things* and for the consequent measurement of the value of goods exchanged, which can be measured in terms of symbols of coinage or money. True, it is impossible to achieve the more human equality of proportionate dignity and worth before the community until that commutative equality is assured. But the equality upon which friendship rests is not that equality which commutative justice secures. Father and son, ruler and subject, are not equal in the same way in which one measure of corn is equal to two measures of barley. There is, however, a proportion between each of them and the society to which they belong which constitutes the basis of the equality upon which friendship rests.<sup>23</sup>

For Aristotle, therefore, society constitutes an ordered hierarchy of friendships based upon justice operating towards the happy communication of all its constituent members in the common good, each in proportion to his dignity and deserts

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 2, 1155b.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 8, 1158b-1159b. Cf. St. Thomas, in *VIII Ethics*, l. 7, n. 1632.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 6, 1157a-1158b.

and all to the fullest possible extent. This is the good life and its fruit is happiness.

These noble conceptions of justice and friendship in the social order, which I have so sketchily summarized from the writings of the two great thinkers of Greece, form the glorious legacy which antiquity bequeathed to the civilization of Western Europe, of which the most adequate philosophical and theological expression is found in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Sublime as Plato's conception of justice was and accurate as was the analysis of that notion which Aristotle made, neither of these great thinkers could find—or, indeed, made any attempt to find—a place in the human society of friends for the helot, the slave. True, both Aristotle and Plato spoke feelingly of the kindness and consideration which good masters ought to show towards their slaves. But such kindness and consideration could find justification only on the basis of utilitarian motives. Slaves were but chattels and were therefore debarred from the advantages of civil friendship. They could not communicate with citizens on the basis of proportional equality. They were thus incapable of sharing the benefits of civic friendship in a truly human manner. Because they were but chattels, they could not be loved for themselves, for their own sakes, but only for the advantage, comfort, service, or utility of their masters. Such a conception of human relations could not fit a society rooted in Christian teaching, according to which there are, in the Kingdom of God, neither Jews nor Gentiles nor bondmen nor slaves. Aristotle and Plato had gone as far as might reasonably be expected of human reason unaided by the light of divine revelation, but they fell far short in this particular from the true conception of society as God had created it.

Another and immeasurably more serious defect in the tradition of Greek social philosophy was its failure to provide for the possibility of friendship between God and man. Such a failure was no doubt inevitable among men who, as Professor Gilson has admirably established in his recent little study on *God and Philosophy*, had no adequate notion of God. Plato



indeed had said that God avenges the unjust who fall short of the divine law<sup>24</sup> and that friendship links heaven and earth and the gods and men together in one vast Cosmos of order and harmony. But who is that God? And who are those gods? Is it not but the inexorable Destiny of which the Stoics later were to speak, the inevitable fate which, in the mythology from which Plato never completely escaped, is identified with the deeper will of Zeus? At all events that God was not a benign Creator, the Alpha and the Omega of all creatures whom all creatures could love because of His benevolence and who loved all creatures because of His goodness. The Platonic God or gods could not be loved by men with the love of friendship though they might and must be obeyed and served with humility and resignation. The case of Aristotle, however, is even more serious. In an interesting passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle discusses the problem whether we, indeed, wish for our friends the greatest of goods since we cannot wish them to become gods, for then they could no longer be our friends and they would lose that good which is their friendship for us. The reason for this is that friendship implies equality and, although it is possible to achieve equality between men of every station and condition, be it only by a very remote proportion, the distance which separates men from the realm of the divine is so great that friendship is impossible. "It is true," he says, "that we cannot fix a precise limit . . . up to which men can still be friends; the gap may go on widening and the friendship still remain; but when one becomes very remote from the other, as God is remote from man, friendship can continue no longer."<sup>25</sup> The point is clear; according to Aristotle, there can be no love or friendship between God and man. How vastly that conception of friendship differs from Christian charity we shall have occasion to see in a few minutes. It becomes still more striking when we consider that the God of Aristotle was but the Thought of Thoughts, the most divine of all divine beings, but not transcendent to the whole order of

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Laws* IV. 715.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Ethics* VIII. 5-6, 1159a5.

beings possessed of divine nature; while the Christian God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God who told Moses that His name was *Jahve*, I am Who am, the one eternal God, the Creator of all that is, who said, "I am the Lord thy God and thou shalt not have strange gods before me."

Despite these deficiencies of the Greek notions of justice and friendship, there is in the tradition of Greek moral, political, and social philosophy a perennially valuable body of sound ethical doctrine which the greatest of Christian philosophers, St. Thomas Aquinas, was not slow to recognize, appreciate, and adopt. The principles of Aristotelian ethics form the warp and woof of the Thomistic teaching on moral and social problems, particularly in dealing with questions concerning the temporal city, the human social order, which enjoys a quasi-autonomy of its own within the larger sphere of the supernatural and spiritual order, and which presents problems to the moral philosopher whose solution depends upon specifically human principles. But even within the larger sphere — the sphere of the spiritual order, which constitutes the state in which all moral values must be judged in their concrete, actual realization — St. Thomas Aquinas does not depart from the moral principles of Aristotle. He sublimates those principles, transforms them, and raises them to heights undreamed of by any Greek and to a level which it could enter into the heart of no man to conceive had not God sent His Only-Begotten Son to reveal His truth to us and to give us a new and more glorious social life in the Mystical Body of Christ.

In dealing with the problems of practical life in the new order which Christ established on earth, however, there is one broad principle from which St. Thomas never departs, viz., that grace does no violence to nature. Grace neither destroys nor invalidates nature; it raises and elevates it. Whatever is natural to man is good and remains good when nature is raised to the level of the supernatural. Natural virtues, natural rights, natural relations, far from being eliminated by grace, are rendered even

more sacred and inviolable, because the whole order of nature to which those virtues, rights, and relations belong is sanctified and reorientated towards an end surpassing every natural capacity and power. The whole natural order itself remains intact, though sublimated, within the Christian economy. And for this very reason St. Thomas was able to take over and did take over all those profound truths and principles of human natural morality which the genius of the Greeks had discovered. The good life which Plato and Socrates extolled so highly and which Aristotle so penetratingly analyzed still remains, in an even higher and nobler sense, the aim and object of human culture and civilization. The fact that a higher end than earthly happiness is proposed to man, that his whole terrestrial life and temporal existence can no longer be regarded as the ultimate and final purpose of his being, does not alter that other fact, viz., that the essence of man, his intrinsic human nature, remains unchanged but is rather taken such as it is and redirected as a whole to a nobler and more sublime destiny. The conditions under which this earthly life must function are not nullified but the *status* in which the natural functions, duties, rights, and all the natural activities of human beings are exercised is no longer the *status* of a purely natural order but the *status* of supernature. The specific character and the essential conditions of those moral relations remain unchanged. To honor and revere one's parents is no less a virtue in conformity with nature for the Christian than it was for the pagan Greek; to murder and to steal are no less violations of the natural law for the one than for the other.

No one who has read even superficially in St. Thomas can fail to see how emphatic is his teaching on the necessity of justice as the indispensable condition of a sound and healthy communication among men. Whether it be in questions concerning commutative justice — fair dealing in barter and exchange, the just price, interest and usury and monetary problems generally, the just remuneration of workmen for their labor and hosts of like questions—or in questions concerning the obligations, duties, rights, privileges, and prerogatives of

wives and husbands, parents and children, rulers and subjects, judges and officials, administration in political affairs and other problems which depend upon distributive justice for a fair solution and settlement, St. Thomas invariably appeals to principles whose matrix may be found in the *Ethics* and *Politics* of Aristotle.

Justice and friendship, therefore, must always remain essential to the establishment, maintenance, and upbuilding of the common life of men upon this earth. Charity does not supersede and eliminate justice as the virtue which establishes that proportional equality among men upon which sane social relations rest; nor does it destroy friendship as the formal cause of society, the very soul of communal life, but perfects it and renders it more efficacious. St. Thomas Aquinas, therefore, regards justice as the basic virtue of the social life, the foundation of domestic and political order. True, in the domestic order, where love and friendship reign, justice is less obviously basic to the common family life. However, justice remains fundamental to this as to every other social group and (to take an illustration from the chaotic condition of family life in modern times) the spectacle of wrecked homes and unhappy marriages in our day ought to be sufficient to show us how basic to domestic life is the observance of that justice wherein conjugal, parental, and filial rights and duties are respected and fulfilled. It is noteworthy, also, that the Popes, and notably Pope Leo XIII and Pope Pius XI, have abundantly confirmed and corroborated St. Thomas's teaching on justice as the very foundation of social and political order.

In dealing with the problem of friendship, however, St. Thomas retains all that the Greeks had taught about the bond of union effected by benevolence, mutual affection, and good will among the members of the community but transports the whole discussion of those questions to another and higher level. In this connection it is instructive to remark that in commenting upon the *Ethics* of Aristotle St. Thomas devotes much time and attention to that great Greek thinker's treatment of the question of friendship but in the *Summa Theologica*, where the



Angelic Doctor's own teaching is expounded, the treatment of friendship as such is restricted to one solitary question in which *amicitia* is dealt with as that part of justice which impels one to exhibit due external recognition of the personal dignity of one's fellow-man by the practice of that urbanity which marks polite human intercourse. The principle of mutual and reciprocal communication in a common good (benevolence, or well-willing) — that principle which Aristotle used to develop his whole teaching on friendship—is dealt with by St. Thomas in connection with the theological virtue of charity.

It is at this point that we see how far the social and political thought of St. Thomas transcended the outlook of the ancient Greeks. For in the last analysis the Christian and the pagan conceptions of the ultimate common good in which all members of society are called upon to participate are poles apart. What we have said above in regard to the complete reorientation of human life in virtue of the Incarnation and Redemption suggests how far the Christian conception of the value, aim, and purpose of human society, while still preserving the noblest ideals of the sages of Greece, transcended their highest aspirations.

For the loftiest speculations and the highest aspirations of even the greatest Greek thinkers never succeeded in reaching the conception of the God of the Jews, the Creator of man and of society and of all things in heaven and on earth, and their thought was still further incapable of conceiving anything like the Christian order of life which the Only-Begotten Son of God made Man established in the world. The Incarnation of the Word of God marked a new era in the history of the world. Nothing human was or could be the same after that event which renewed the face of the earth. Society could no longer be regarded as the union of men in justice and friendship merely for the pursuit of man's well-being and happiness in that short period bounded by the nothingness that precedes birth and the nothingness that follows death. The ancient Jews well knew that human society was more than that and their knowledge and tradition, derived from God's revelation as set forth in the

Old Testament, was the spiritual promise of which Christian conceptions of life and society were the fulfillment. But the Greeks knew nothing of all that, and because they envisaged no loftier purpose in society than what they termed "the good life," i. e., a life of virtuous and happy living on this earth, they could not conceive of any sort of equality which could furnish a basis for friendship between God and man. No doubt their souls were troubled with the thought that death might mean the end of all things. The reflections of Socrates before his death, as reported both by Plato and by Xenophon, reveal the deep concern of that great Greek sage for what "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns" might be. But the eyes of the Greeks could not pierce the veil because they had not been told by God what lies behind it. St. Thomas Aquinas was moved to pity for the great men of the past whose vision was limited to the prospect of mere earthly existence. "*Quantas angustias patiebantur eorum magna ingenia!*" (What deep anguish those great geniuses have suffered) he exclaims in considering the failure of Aristotle and of his commentators Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Arabian Averroes to see a loftier destiny in human life and human society than the brief and passing happiness of the good life here on earth. They did not know that Adam once walked the garden in the friendship of God and that the second Adam, Christ, had come to restore what Adam, by his sin, had lost and in that restoration established a twofold basis of equality upon which men might be united once more in friendship with their God.

By the Incarnation God had spanned the gap between the divine and the human which Aristotle regarded as the impassable distance separating God from man and rendering all friendship between them utterly impossible. For by the Incarnation the Son of God became man and through the fruits of the Redemption men were made partakers of the divine nature, adopted sons of God. Upon the basis of this twofold equality—proportional equality, indeed—true friendship was established and mutual communication in a common good—in this case

human nature possessed in common by Christ and by all mankind on the one hand and divine nature possessed by Christ in His own right and by men by grace of adoption, on the other hand. As St. Augustine has aptly said, "The Son of God became the Son of man that we who are the sons of man might become sons of God."<sup>26</sup>

By the gift of divine grace, merited by Christ upon the Cross and given to men in Baptism, men are born into a life and receive a nature (as it is the function and purpose of all birth to bestow). It is the life of God operating through the infused theological and moral virtues and the nature of God bestowed upon the adopted sons of the Eternal Father. In virtue of this new life and this new nature society is transformed and a new basis of justice and friendship is laid down. Men are one, now, in a new association whose common good is no longer merely temporal and earthly but spiritual and heavenly. The reign of Christ in the society of men is henceforth and forever established. Human society in all its forms and functions is permeated with fresh vigor, given a nobler purpose, and consolidated by a bond of union transcendent and divine. All men without exception are united in that common life, and every human institution, natural or voluntary, is embraced within that higher life of the supernatural society of men with God.

In a word, because all moral and social values must be judged by reference to the end of human acts and conduct, there can no longer be any ultimately and truly real value in the actual, concrete doings and works of men except in so far as they are orientated towards that single and sole end which is the friendship and the love of God. It is this very friendship—the common possession of all whom Christ redeemed—that constitutes the new social bond among men. Charity thus replaces merely human friendship as the constitutive element in human society. All men live in that supernatural order whether they are aware of it or not and cannot henceforth live in any other.

The consequences of this Christian revelation for society are

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *De Civitate Dei*, XXI. 15.

radical and far-reaching. Domestic society, i. e., family life, with all its implications, takes on a fresh significance. Marriage among the children of God is no longer a mere human contract but a sacred, holy union, a symbol of the union of Christ with the souls of men redeemed by His blood. The procreation, nourishment, education, and upbringing of children is no longer a merely temporal and material concern; it is the bringing of new members into the society of God's friendship, the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God upon earth and the preparation of human beings for His kingdom in heaven. Political society, no less than domestic society, attains a new dignity and importance. Its rulers are no longer mere representatives and depositories of human authority but representatives and depositories of the authority of God himself, destined to govern their fellow-men in justice and honor so that the peace of Christ may reign in the kingdom of Christ and men may live an integral human and Christian life upon this earth. Every voluntary society which men may form for purposes of education, industry, commerce, recreation, culture, or progress is dominated by a loftier aim than its specific purpose may provide because Christ has redeemed all human things and given to them a dignity which nature alone could never give.

The Christian conception of the relation of justice to friendship in society may be roughly recapitulated in the following statements.

1. All society, all social life, subsists by friendship. Society is but another name for friendship and societies are differentiated from one another according to the particular friendships they aim to foster.
2. Society—or friendship—cannot be established except upon the basis of justice, for justice rectifies the undue inequalities among the members of a group and makes for that proportional equality upon which friendship rests.
3. Justice is therefore the necessary prerequisite, the dispository cause of society; friendship is its formal cause, its very soul.



4. The Greeks developed a high and noble conception of human justice and friendship which remained in Christian thought, and especially in the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, the norm of judgment on matters of purely natural and human intercourse.
5. The deficiencies of the Greek outlook on society were principally two—their failure to embrace all men (even slaves) within the common human life and their inability to conceive of any quality of friendship between God and man.
6. This failure was inevitable in the Greek view of life, which proposed only a natural end for man and for society.
7. With the Judaeo-Christian outlook upon the destiny of man, the problem of establishing a basis for friendship between God and man was solved by the divine dispensation according to which God raised man to the supernatural order and gave him the gift of supernatural grace, which is a participation in divine nature.
8. In the Christian dispensation the grace which Adam lost for mankind by his sin of pride and disobedience was restored by Christ.
9. By the Incarnation of the Son of God a twofold basis of proportional equality between God and man was established: God became man that men might share in the nature of God by adoption.
10. The results of this divine economy for the personal and social life of men were radical. A new order of means to ends was constituted. Man's ultimate aim in life could no longer be conceived of as a purely natural end. Justice, therefore, could come only through men giving to God and to one another what the supernatural condition of man demanded, and friendship among men was transformed into fraternal charity based upon the common possession of the love and friendship of God.
11. Social life and relations in all their multifarious forms assumed a new and nobler significance, for, despite the fact that nature remains intact within the supernatural, the

whole order of natural rights, duties, and responsibilities is redirected towards a loftier destiny and purpose.

12. That purpose is the reign of Christ on earth, through an integral realization of truly human living based upon justice and constituted by the supernatural friendship of charity, and the reign of Christ in heaven, in the kingdom of God beyond the portals of death.

Upon the basis of these Christian conceptions of society and human life St. Thomas raised the whole edifice of his political doctrines.

Within the infinite scope of truly Christian charity there is no room for hatred of any man. Truth must indeed remain inviolable and heresy, error, and all forms of falsehood must be inexorably opposed. But men of all nations, races, and creeds—despite their errors or their vices—are still the chosen children of God and as such are our brothers, our friends, our kindred.

So in these trying times when nation is set against nation, people against people, and men against men, it is fruitful to remember that we may fight but never hate, oppose but always respect the human and divine dignity of our very enemies. St. Thomas lived in trying times when the German Emperor was striving to subdue the Pope; St. Thomas's brothers were officers in the service of that Emperor; his father's castle was captured and occupied by the German conquerors; the monastery where the boy Thomas went to school, the famous Abbey of Monte Casino, was ravaged by the invaders; yet throughout the whole great volume of his writings St. Thomas makes no mention of these trying experiences. Doing in his day what our present Holy Father has never ceased to do, he aimed to teach and to inculcate in all who heard his words or read his works the love of truth and the love of God and, for the sake of God and truth, the love of our fellow-men and the absolute necessity of justice and friendship for the maintenance of a Christian human society upon this earth.

## CLAUDEL AND THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

By L. S. BONDY, C. S. B.

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THOUGH there is a wide range of opinion in estimating the quality and the value of the Catholic Revival in contemporary French Literature, its existence is no longer questioned even by the most unsympathetic critics and historians. It is an acknowledged fact that during the last eighty or ninety years, a very notable part of French Literature, I mean literature properly so called, literature as one of the fine arts, shows evidence of a profound and increasing influence of Catholic doctrine, Catholic morality, Catholic life. It is an influence that is not content with the role of a surface accessory but is reaching down to essentials, to the very well-springs of literary production. A detailed study of the movement would carry us far beyond the scope of this article. However we can hardly hope to reach an intelligent appreciation of Paul Claudel without first situating him in the movement to which he owes so much and which in turn he has enriched more, perhaps, than any other writer. We shall limit ourselves to those parts of the Catholic Revival which seem to have exercised a definite influence on our poet.

In the Middle Ages, Europe had witnessed a similar flowering of Catholic letters. This is not surprising when we realize to what extent the whole civilization of the period was Catholic. To find a rose growing on a rose-bush is not astonishing. But when we find a particularly luxuriant rose apparently emerging from a stock of poison-ivy, the event should at least arouse our curiosity. And indeed, one needs to be very charitable and even highly imaginative to discern in the society of the Second Empire and the Third Republic a particularly Catholic form of civilization. It would not be very difficult, *a priori*, to marshal an imposing array of reasons to prove that, at that time, a Catholic revival of letters simply could not happen. Yet happen it did; and there seems to be no good reason to think that it

has spent itself. It is even quite possible that it has not reached its peak. What will happen when the present cataclysm is over, no one can prophecy. But this, I think, we know: the forces at work in this movement are so strong and vital that they are least likely to be destroyed and may even emerge with added strength from the horrible bath of blood and destruction.

The sources of any literary movement, if we push our inquiry far enough will generally lead us as far back as our patience will endure. For literature bears a close resemblance to life, and life is as mysterious a word as can be found in any language. I need not say how arbitrary are the dates we professors assign to such things as classicism, romanticism and symbolism. How can we speak of Boileau without conjuring up Horace and Aristotle? And did not Sainte-Beuve go to the sixteenth century to find ancestors for his contemporary romantic friends? If then we place Charles Baudelaire at the beginning of the Catholic Revival, it is because we must begin somewhere and the author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* and especially of *Mon Cœur mis à nu* does mark a well characterized if embryonic stage in the development of the movement. This assumption is by no means universally accepted. The life of Baudelaire with all its wild eccentricities, his taste for mystification, his insufferable arrogance, his pornographic reputation, his categorical denials of Christian faith, are all poor recommendations for the role of father of a Catholic movement. Such an excellent critic as Abbé Calvet firmly believes that nothing soundly Catholic can ever come from such a questionable source.

A good deal of misunderstanding will be avoided if we note at the outset that there is no question here of canonizing Baudelaire. Whether or not Baudelaire saved his soul, is a matter of rather serious importance for Baudelaire. It has however, very little bearing on the question we are now discussing. We must not forget that our problem is primarily a literary problem and in this field it is not at all impossible that a Catholic movement should begin under auspices that are far from being orthodox. You know what the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas owes to Aristotle; the theology of St. Augustine to



Plato. Yet the Bishop of Hippo and the Angel of the Schools are still comfortably removed from the Index Expurgatorius. Several critics have gone to considerable pains to defend the Catholicism of Baudelaire. The work of Gonzague de Reynold, of Charles DuBos, of Stanislaus Fumet needs no introduction. I cannot help thinking that all this is beside the point. The important fact is that, consciously or not, he blew a clarion call that invited French poetry and literature in general away from the miasma of morbid sentimentality and along paths where it could meet Catholic influence and, at times, recognize in it not only a kindred trend but even an inseparable companion. That it was thereby also exposed to another and a contradictory influence perhaps authentically diabolical is also true as we have abundant reason to know. French literature had succeeded in creating for itself a world where sin was no longer recognized. Human joys and sorrows were quite generally divorced from any consequences in a world beyond the grave. Much of Lamartine's poetry is a morbid mixture of love for another man's wife and respect for a rather hazy deity. Musset's best work is a threnody over the faithlessness of one who was little more than a prostitute. To call these things by their name seems an almost necessary preface to any real improvement. Maritain has well stated the case:

It is through the experience of sin and in the grief of despair that the nineteenth century will see spirituality awaken in partibus infidelium: by a Baudelaire, by a Rimbaud. An ambiguous spirituality, good for heaven, if grace takes hold on it, good for hell if pride steps in. Many of our contemporaries will seek in anti-reason and below reason food for their souls which should only be sought above reason.<sup>1</sup>

It was in 1846 or 1847 that Baudelaire became acquainted with the work of Edgar Allen Poe. To say he was profoundly influenced is, I believe, an exaggeration. He was twenty-five years old and had already given ample evidence that he was Charles Baudelaire who never really learned much or at least never accepted much knowledge except that which came through

<sup>1</sup> *Le Songe de Descartes*, pp. 274-275.

personal experience. De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* had to be tested in the dive before they could find a place in *Les Paradis artificiels*. He took from others only what he considered as being already his own. This is perhaps the best explanation of his failure to use quotation marks when he gave an almost literal translation of an important passage of Poe's *Poetic Principle*. I suppose we have all had the sad experience of seeing some of our finest discoveries used by someone who just happened to be born before us. It is this quotation that will mark a turning point in the best of modern poetry:

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms and sounds and odors and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, and the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms and sounds and colors and odors and sentiments a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid truth of description, of the sights and sounds and odors and colors and sentiments which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We still have a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an exstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multi-form combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of the Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry—or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears, it is not . . . through excess of pleasure, but through a certain petulant, impatient sorrow at our own inability to grasp now, wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.<sup>2</sup>

The last part of this quotation appears twice in Baudelaire's

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Poe, *The Poetic Principle*.

works. It should be noted that neither Poe nor Baudelaire seem to arrive at this theory of poetry from a religious idea or for a religious motive. Both apparently followed a path that was exactly the reverse and thereby, perhaps unconsciously, opened the road to what Stanislaus Fumet considers the distinctively characteristic and important note in modern art:

That is why Baudelaire had, almost without knowing it, to invent another art which will be modern art, that compromise between art as such and a mystic intuition, or more properly a compromise between poetry and religion. He did not know what he was doing and he was joining forces with the presentiments of Wagner, he was begetting at once Rimbaud and the best Verlaine; he was uniting himself to the Catholicism of Ernest Hello and preparing that of Léon Bloy and Paul Claudel.<sup>3</sup>

In this art the external world is indeed what it seems to be but it is also something more. It speaks a mysterious language and is a means of reaching a higher reality, a nobler truth which alone can reconcile man with the necessity of dragging out weary days of his dreary existence.

*La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.*

*Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.*<sup>4</sup>

To reach a vantage point where the mysterious communications become perceptible, is the poet's privilege and to enjoy it he must rise above the ordinary level of humanity.

So, the principle of poetry is strictly and simply the human aspiration for a superior beauty, and the manifestation of this principle is in an enthusiasm, an exciting of the soul,—an enthusiasm which is entirely independent of passion which is the intoxication of the heart, and truth which is the food of reason.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Notre Baudelaire* (Plon, 1926), p. 58.    <sup>4</sup> Baudelaire, *Correspondances*.

<sup>5</sup> Baudelaire, *Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe. Oeuvres complètes* (N. R. F. 1928), vol. XI, p. 31.

Or again in his celebrated prose poem *Enivrez-vous*: "One must be always intoxicated . . . but with what? With wine, poetry or virtue at your choice. But get intoxicated."<sup>6</sup> The tragedy of Baudelaire's life came largely from the forbidden and futile forms of intoxication he used in a vain attempt to reach his goal. But he had begun a kind of experimentation which is still going on and which had made the poet's vocation extremely hazardous since it forces him into contact with the supernatural at one end or the other of the human scale. This is the profound truth contained in Barbey d'Aurevilly's remark to Baudelaire after the publication of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, that after such a book, his only logical choice was to throw himself at the foot of the cross or blow out his brains. We have good reason to think that Baudelaire finally chose the cross.

There is another point on which Baudelaire has profoundly influenced modern poetry. In his study of the world in order to wrest from it its secret message of the world beyond, the poet is forced to deal with external nature as he sees it mirrored in the depths of his own soul. Only by constant introspection, by the observing not merely of his conscious self but of the sporadic manifestations rising from the sub-conscious will he be able gradually to learn his important lesson. Only by an absolute candor and honesty will he be able to communicate it to others. Here again Baudelaire finds himself in complete agreement with, if not under the direct influence of, Poe who wrote in his *Marginalia*:

If an ambitious man have a fancy to revolutionize, at one effort, the universal world of human thought, human opinion, and human sentiment, the opportunity is his own; the road to immortal renown lies straight, open, and unincumbered before him. All that he has to do is to write and publish a very little book. Its title should be simple, a few plain words: My Heart Laid Bare. But this little book must be true to its title.<sup>7</sup>

Baudelaire did not live long enough to publish *Mon Cœur mis à nu* but the notes he left behind have played an important role in contemporary poetry.

<sup>6</sup> *Petits Poèmes en Prose*, p. 106. <sup>7</sup> *Marginalia* XLI.



It was in 1857 that Baudelaire published *Les Fleurs du Mal*. He was arrested, convicted of immorality and fined. He had but few defenders. In 1866 appeared the first edition of *Le Parnasse Contemporain*. Baudelaire was included but for reasons and qualities quite foreign to those that were to determine his real influence. The day of that influence had not yet dawned. This is the generation that marks the acceptance of the factual, precise sculptural parnassian ideal in poetry; and the materialistic, deterministic, positivist naturalism in the novel. This is the world of Lecomte de Lisle, of Flaubert and Zola, of Renan and Taine. It would be difficult to imagine a more uncongenial soil for the growth of the movement that was to spring from Baudelaire. The men of that generation who were deprived of religious faith passed into an intellectual world where on every side the horizon was, so to speak, walled off. Philosophy, which comes next to theology in the hierarchy of our sources of knowledge, had definitely capitulated to mathematico-physical science. Kant and Auguste Comte, to mention but two, had succeeded in relegating metaphysics to the category of outworn myths and superstitions. The directors of the lay conscience were Hypolite Taine and Ernest Renan. The Naturalists were holding up as the model of all art the photographic reproduction of material reality. Claudel has given us a graphic picture of the atmosphere of his youth in Paris:

Just recall those sad years of the eighties, the period of the full flowering of naturalistic literature. Never did the reign of matter seem more securely established. Everything that had a name in art, in science and in literature was irreligious. All the (self-styled) great men of the finishing century were particularly distinguished for their hostility to the Church. Renan reigned. He presided at the last Commencement exercises I attended at the lycée Louis-le-Grand, . . . Victor Hugo had just disappeared in an apotheosis.<sup>8</sup>

And again a little later in one of his great odes:

*O mon Dieu, je me rappelle ces ténèbres où nous étions face  
à face tous les deux, ces sombres après-midi d'hiver  
à Notre-Dame,*

<sup>8</sup> *Ma Conversion*, p. 34.

*Moi tout seul, tout en bas, éclairant la face du grand Christ  
de bronze avec un cierge de 25 centimes.  
Tous les hommes alors étaient contre nous et je ne ré-  
pondais rien, la science, la raison.  
La foi seule était en moi et je vous regardais en silence  
comme un homme qui préfère son ami.<sup>9</sup>*

Readers of Claudel are all familiar with the magnificent strains of thanksgiving in his *Magnificat*:

*Soyez béni, Mon Dieu, qui m'avez délivré des idoles,  
Et qui faites que je n'adore que Vous seul, et non point Isis  
et Osiris,  
Ou la Justice, ou le Progrès, ou la Vérité, ou la Divinité,  
ou l'Humanité, ou les Lois de la Nature ou l'Art ou  
la Beauté,  
Et qui n'avez pas permis d'exister à toutes ces choses qui  
ne sont pas, ou le Vide laissé par votre absence.<sup>10</sup>*

It seems that everything possible was being done to limit man's life and all his interests to this earth. But, as Professor Gilson says in *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, man is not only a rational animal, he is also a metaphysical animal. Any attempt to keep his eyes fixed on material things, to wean his curiosity from soaring into the why and wherefor of things and particularly of his own life, any such attempt is doomed to short-lived success. The means he uses to slake his thirst may not be adequate, may even serve only to increase his thirst. But he must try something. At this stage the revolt is incarnate in the mysterious and troubling person of Arthur Rimbaud.

I once had a professor who dealt with Rimbaud in one phrase: "*Ce fou d'Arthur Rimbaud!*" This method had the advantage of shortening the course and sparing us much mental fatigue but that is about all that can be said in its favor. With the exception of Baudelaire, I know no modern poet who has exercised a more wide-spread influence, good and bad—I fear rather bad than good. However since he made a public confession and passed severe judgment, we can be more lenient; the more so because it is unjust to place all the blame on his shoulders.

<sup>9</sup> *Cinq Grandes Odes*, pp. 164-165.

<sup>10</sup> *Cinq Grandes Odes*, pp. 85-86.

In condemning a rebellion it is well to bear in mind the conditions that provoked it, else we may find ourselves indirectly approving things we really want to oppose. His experiment in many ways proved disastrous but it at least made it more difficult for thinking men to live satisfied in the stifling dungeon of a naturalist and positivist society. His was not a reasoned revolt. It appeared in him as a child, which may not appear very strange in view of his particular home environment. But what is very strange is that by the time he is sixteen, he is already in possession of a poetical technique as perfect as that of any poet of the century with the possible exception of Victor Hugo; and it would not be hard to find critics who would rule out even that exception. The life and work of Rimbaud has encountered every rating from the most exaggerated praise to patently unjust condemnation. Paterne Berrichon and his wife Isabelle Rimbaud have carried fraternal affection to a point that strains our credulity but Marcel Coulon and François Porché seem to have gone to the other extreme. Since we are particularly interested in Claudel, let us see his explanation of this strange genius because, as he says, "I am one of those who have accepted his word, one of those who have trusted him."<sup>11</sup> In 1908 he writes to Jacques Rivière:

Rimbaud has been the capital influence of my life. Others, and particularly Shakespeare, Eschylus, Dante and Dostoievsky have been my masters and have shown me the secrets of my art. But Rimbaud alone has exercised an influence which I shall call seminal and paternal and which makes me really believe in generation in the order of spirits as well as in that of bodies. I shall always remember that morning of June 1886 when I bought that little issue of *La Vogue* which contained the beginning of *Les Illuminations*. It was really one for me. I was at last emerging from that hideous world of Taine, of Renan and the other Molochs of the nineteenth century, from that dungeon, from that awful mechanical world entirely governed by perfectly inflexible laws and, which was the limit of the horrible, laws that were knowable and teachable. . . . I had the revelation of the supernatural.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Positions et Propositions*, I, p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Correspondance avec Jacques Rivière*, pp. 142-143.

Claudél sees three periods in the testimony of Rimbaud. The first is the period of revolt and violence. "The demon of Rimbaud," says Marcel Raymond, "is that of revolt and destruction. What bears the name of civilization and the Western Man is what he dreams of pouncing on like a beast of prey: the state, public order and its constraints, 'established happiness,' the conventional style of love and families, Christianity, morals, in short all the products of the human mind he denies and ridicules."<sup>13</sup>

In the second period, Rimbaud is trying to find and reveal a way out of all these difficulties. This is the period of *Les Illuminations*. We stand in need of a certain knowledge not only for the enrichment but for the very living of our lives. This knowledge our intelligence is powerless to give. Yes, even the combined efforts of intelligence which we call civilization have failed miserably in their attempt to give a meaning to our lives, to make our lives worth living. It is to find this secret and so necessary knowledge that Rimbaud launches into extra-intellectual channels. Of Baudelaire's experiments, he retains at this time nothing but the ambitious dreams, apparently oblivious of the confession of failure written on nearly every page of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Baudelaire is for him: "*Le premier voyant, un vrai dieu*"—the first of seers, a veritable god. The crushing conviction of the futility of his efforts will come to him much more quickly than it did to Baudelaire. What is *Une Saison en Enfer* but a less musical though perhaps more profound *Voyage à Cythère* or *Cloche Fêlée*? But at this stage he believes that the poet must become a seer—*un voyant*. The famous letter of May 15th, 1871, to Izambard remains a capital text:

The first study of the man who wants to be a poet is his own knowledge in its entirety. He searches for his soul, inspects it, tries it, learns it. . . . It is a question of making the soul monstrous . . . like a man who would plant and cultivate warts on his face. I say that one must be a *seer*, must make himself a *seer*. The Poet makes himself a *seer* by a long, immense and reasoned *disordering*

<sup>13</sup> *De Baudelaire au Surréalisme*, p. 39.



of *all his senses*. Every form of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches for and exhausts in himself all the poisons to keep of them nothing but the quintessence. An ineffable torture in which he needs superhuman faith and strength, in which he becomes the greatest of sick men, the greatest criminal, the most accursed—and supreme in his knowledge—because he arrives at the *unknown*.<sup>14</sup>

He realizes that such experiments are very dangerous. But what does it matter? If he falls by the way, he will at least have revealed the existence of the magic land and other “seers” will come and start where he leaves off. Since that day, Baudelaire and Rimbaud have never been without disciples and imitators. You will note that we are not dealing here with the age-old story of sin; man yielding to temptation and closing his eyes to the consequences for fear of having to struggle against it. We have to do here with a deliberate attempt to experiment with sin in an attempt and a hope of finding a cure for the terrible ennui that seems to be weighing more and more heavily on poor mortals. It is easy for us to predict the inevitable failure of such experiments and their devastating results on those who attempt them. But let us not forget that, if we are able to do that, it is by virtue of a knowledge which we owe to our God-given faith. The society of that day and, for that matter, the society in which we live has done its best to close the doors that lead to that faith and is rapidly destroying the last links that bound it to Christ. The thorough-going practical Christian is becoming more and more *abnormal* and the day seems not far distant when the living of a Catholic life will require something close to heroism. We might note here, as a parenthesis, that the study of contemporary literature is not without its dangers. Teaching it to adolescents gives rise to problems that are frightening. Teaching it in an expurgated form with morality to guide the selection is likely to prove more damaging even from the moral standpoint. It might be better not to teach it at all. But all this is another story and one that would deserve a discussion all its own.

I might compare the Baudelaire-Rimbaud tradition to a

<sup>14</sup> *Nouvelle Revue Française*, VIII (1912), 570.

subterranean passage, itself leading only to disaster but running parallel to the path that leads to light and to the ultimate solution of all human problems. Here and there in some mysterious way, a shaft seems to lead from the lower to the higher level permitting escape from despair and even allowing the experiences on the road of darkness to make for greater progress on the road of light. So Huysmans writes *A Rebours* for reasons he never could explain even in the light of his subsequent conversion. Bourget publishes *Le Disciple*, which even his closest friends could hardly have foretold. Maritain reads *La Femme Pauvre* and in the space of a few months finds his whole life, as he says, turned inside out like a glove. It would be easy to multiply these examples. Have you ever noticed that among the many great figures of the Catholic Revival, nearly all are converts or, what is even more strange, men who had abandoned their faith and who found it again. It is equally true that, in the great majority of cases, the conversion does not seem to have been due to the influence of Catholics but rather to those whom Verlaine has called "les poètes maudits." I have long been trying to explain this extraordinary phenomenon, and so far have failed to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. One is almost frightened to think that perhaps Léon Bloy was right and that the famous page of *Le Désespéré* may not be such an exaggeration. It is addressed to the Catholics of the nineteenth century but is not yet very shop-worn:

It is Voltairian childishness to accuse these Catholics of crimes. The surpassing horror is that they are *mediocre*. A man covered with crimes is always interesting. He is a target for Mercy. He is a member of the immense flock of pardonable goats, that can be whitened by salutary immolations. . . . But innocent mediocrity upsets everything. It had been foreseen, doubtless, but barely so, as the worst torture of the Passion, as the most unbearable of the agonies of Calvary. It slaps Christ in the face in such a complete way, and brings to naught so absolutely the divinity of the Sacrifice that it is impossible to conceive a more beautiful proof for Christianity than the miracle of its survival in spite of the monstrous mediocrity of the majority of its faithful! Ah, it is easy to understand the panic, the wild flight of the nineteenth century away

from the ridiculous God who is presented to it; and one understands its fury! Yet it is very base, this wretched century and has little right to be exacting! But precisely because it is vile, the monstrosity of the Faith should be extra-sublime and should shine like the sun.<sup>15</sup>

Even if we make allowance for the exasperation for which Bloy is famous, this passage can still give us much food for thought. It also adds a vigorous trait to the picture of Parisian life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was into this environment that Claudel was thrown at the age of fourteen, that is, at the age when he was most likely to be deeply influenced by it. He was born in 1868 in the little village of Villeneuve-sur-Fère en Tardenois in the Department of the Aisne, the Champagne district "between Racine and LaFontaine" as he tells us: his birthplace being about midway between LaFerté Milon and Château-Thierry. The scene of *L'Annonce faite à Marie* is laid definitely in this section of the country. A grand uncle of Claudel had been pastor of the village church. Paul's father was a civil functionary and the family moved rather frequently. However the boy's education proceeds normally and, when the family settles in Paris in 1882, he goes to Louis-le-Grand where, in the judgment of his professors, he leaves an enviable record. He does not return the compliment. He confided to Frédéric Lefèvre: "The lycée Louis-le-Grand turned out for society a recruit whose instruction was mediocre and whose education was a pitiful failure."<sup>16</sup> And again: "Those years at Louis-le-Grand are a painful period to which my memory does not like to return and which I should like to erase completely from my life. I did not really begin to live till the day when I escaped from the oppression of the classroom and the school."<sup>17</sup> What brought about the complete abandonment of his faith is not entirely clear. But we have only to recall some of the facts already mentioned to realize that it would have required a strong faith indeed to live in so uncongenial a surrounding. This was the time when Gambetta and his col-

<sup>15</sup> *Le Désespéré*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>16</sup> Fr. Lefèvre: *Les Sources de Paul Claudel* (Paris: 1927), p. 113.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

leagues were determined to use the school system to the full extent of their ability to take away from the youth of France every vestige of Christian thought and influence. In a country where ridicule is such a deadly weapon, every form of ridicule was being hurled at everything Catholic, from the pharisaical ridicule of Ernest Renan to the increasingly corrosive brand of Anatole France. It was humanly impossible for the boy to resist the combined influence of playmates and professors along with that of everything that counted in the literary and the learned world. But when his eyes were forcibly opened, the sentiment with which he turned on all these influences was something akin to nausea. Of Renan in particular, he never can speak without disgust. Recall the almost too powerful stanza of *Magnificat*:

*Restez avec moi, Seigneur, parce que le soir approche et ne  
m'abandonnez pas!*

*Ne me perdez point avec les Voltaire, et les Renan, et les  
Michelet, et les Hugo, et tous les autres infâmes!*

*Leur âme est avec les chiens morts, leurs livres sont joints  
au fumier.*

*Ils sont morts, et leur nom même après leur mort est un  
poison et une pourriture.*<sup>18</sup>

If he had thought to find happiness in following the guiding spirits of the day, young Claudel was soon undeceived and, as in the case of Baudelaire, he soon discovered that this form of life leads to a very real form of slavery and a peculiar kind of blindness. He knew that he was in a dungeon but could find no way of escape: "*O les longues rues amères autrefois et le temps où j'étais seul et un.*"<sup>19</sup> The discovery of Rimbaud in June 1886 came upon him as a sort of revelation and, under the circumstances, might easily have made of him a disciple in the direct line of the surrealists, a Laforgue or more probably a Lautréamont. It was then that the most important event of his life came to tear him violently away from this dangerous path and set his face along the road that was to lead him to the fame we know.

<sup>18</sup> *Cinq Grandes Odes*, p. 108.

<sup>19</sup> *Cinq Grandes Odes*, p. 79.



Such was the unhappy child who, on December 25th, 1886, went to Notre Dame to assist at the office of Christmas. At that time I was beginning to write and it seemed to me that the Catholic ceremonial, if considered from the vantage point of a superior dilettantism, might offer me a stimulant appropriate to certain decadent experiments. It was in such dispositions that, elbowed and pushed around by the crowd, I assisted at High Mass with mediocre pleasure. Then, having nothing else to do, I came back to Vespers . . . and it was then that occurred the event that dominates my whole life. In an instant my heart was touched and I believed. I believed with such force of adhesion, with such an uplifting of my whole being, with so powerful a conviction, with such certitude leaving no room for any kind of doubt, that since then, all the books, all the arguments, all the chance happenings of a busy life have been powerless to shake my faith or, in fact, to even touch it.<sup>20</sup>

But if the young man was so thoroughly convinced, he was to find that the discovery of an ideal and its attainment are very different things, that human habits and ways of life are sometimes stubborn things and will not suffer themselves to be dislodged overnight. "Discovery is nothing," says Valéry, "the difficult part is to add to ourselves what we have found." Four years of bitter struggle were to pass before Claudel could bring his new-found faith into his life in a practical manner. He has given us a glimpse of those weary years especially in *Ma Conversion* and in *Vers d'Exil*. That he had to surrender he never seems to have doubted for a moment. A very definite cleavage had come into his life:

*Ce lendemain n'est pas du jour qui fut hier.*<sup>21</sup>

It is the *Hound of Heaven* theme which he is now living and which will occupy a prominent place in his dramatic work. The voice that called him that Christmas afternoon in Notre Dame gives him no respite:

*Car un jour j'ai senti bouger dans l'épaisseur,  
Sous l'homme et le plus bas où le vivre se fonde,  
La réclamation de l'entraille profonde.  
Depuis lors je connais le désir sans douceur.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ma Conversion*, pp. 52-53. <sup>21</sup> *Vers d'Exil*, I, p. 226. <sup>22</sup> *Vers d'Exil*, II, p. 228.

Until the day of the surrender came and the accumulated influences that had drawn him away from his God were beaten down one by one and completely banished from his life.

*Tu m'as vaincu, mon bien-aimé! Mon annemi,  
Tu m'as pris dans les mains mes armes une à une.  
Et maintenant je n'ai plus de défense aucune.  
Et voici que je suis un devant vous, Ami!*

*Ni le jeune Désir, ni la Raison qui ruse,  
Ni la chimère ainsi qu'un cheval ébloui,  
Ne m'ont été loyaux et sûrs; tout m'a trahi!  
Et ni mon lâche cœur ne m'a servi d'excuse.*

*J'ai fui en vain; partout j'ai retrouvé la Loi.  
Il faut céder enfin! O porte, il faut admettre  
L'hôte; cœur frémissant, il faut subir le maître,  
Quelqu'un qui soit en moi plus moi-même que moi.*

*Ayez pitié de moi qui suis ici, cieux, sphères!  
J'ai devancé l'appel des Morts; je suis présent.  
Juste Juge, Eternel, Dieu Saint, Dieu Tout-Puissant,  
Me voici tout vivant entre vos mains sévères.<sup>23</sup>*

If Claudel's conversion had not been so profound, it would not have caused him so much anguish. There were not lacking around him examples of people for whom their religion was a private matter and whose lives were the sickly compromise that so aroused the caustic ire of Léon Bloy. But with Claudel there could be no such compromise. He had long dreamed of being a poet. The ambition of his life now represented itself in an entirely different light. If he were to be a poet, he would have to be a Catholic poet; not just a Catholic and a poet. A discussion of the difficulties this involves would take us much too far. In looking back over the field of French literature, or any other literature for that matter, Claudel would find so few who had realized this ideal to a degree that was completely satisfactory that he might well have serious misgivings. Like G. M. Hopkins before and Mauriac later, he might well ask himself if there was not some inner and inescapable contradiction between the actual living of one's religious faith and striving

<sup>23</sup> *Vers d'Exil*, VII, pp. 237-238.

after the material expression of the beautiful for its own sake. If he asked himself these questions, Claudel happily found the correct answer which is perhaps best expressed once more in Mauriac's words. It is all a question of purifying the source. The first requirement is to be a Catholic in the fullest sense of the word; one who makes use of the means which the Catholic Church places at his disposal to bring his life every day in closer harmony not only with the precepts but also with the advice of the Master. Then, if you are Maritain, you will be a *Catholic* philosopher, if you are Gilson, you will be a *Catholic* historian; if you are Mauriac or Bernanos, your novels will tend to be *Catholic* novels. And if you are Paul Claudel you will not only write beautiful poetry but you will invite your readers to a realm where only the Catholic is at home, where only he can really understand and fully appreciate.

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# THE DEMONSTRATION OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

By MORTIMER J. ADLER

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## I

I CAME upon the work of Jacques Maritain during the early years of my study of St. Thomas. I can express my debt of gratitude to him as a teacher in no better way than by saying that he taught me how to read St. Thomas *formalisime*.<sup>1</sup> The manner and spirit of his discipleship to St. Thomas shows that allegiance to an intellectual tradition need not blind one to the limitations of the past, nor relieve one from facing the exigencies of the present. Not merely by his insistence on the necessity for stripping "the great truths of antiquity of the errors which grow parasitically on them,"<sup>2</sup> but by his own re-thinking of traditional positions does he show us how to disengage philosophical truths from the adventitious imagery of an historical culture, be it ancient or mediaeval, and how to exorcise irrelevant errors of fact.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Rien de plus tragique que ces glissements de l'intelligence, quand elle passe insensiblement d'un principe très élevé formellement vrai à une application ou matérialisation menteuse; on trouve beaucoup de ces glissements chez les Grecs, c'est pourquoi les scolastiques disaient qu'il importe toujours d'entendre Aristote *formalissime*" (*Questions de Conscience*, Paris, 1938: p. 99).

<sup>2</sup> *Scholasticism and Politics*, New York, 1940: p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> "A sound philosophy can dispense with the particular system of scientific explanations of which it makes use in accordance with the state of science at a particular epoch, and if that system were one day proved false, the truth of that philosophy would not be affected. Only its language and the sensible illustrations with which it clothes its truths would require modification. . . . From what has been said we can understand why the purely scientific mistakes to be found in the older statements of Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, statements which inevitably bear the stamp of the scientific beliefs of their period, do nothing to discredit the truth of that philosophy" (*An Introduction to Philosophy*, New York, 1930: pp. 120-21). And he adds in a footnote on p. 122: "The 'crime' of the decadent Scholastics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was that they believed, and made others believe, that the philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas was in this sense bound up with the mistakes of ancient science, of which it is in



My study of the philosophy of St. Thomas began twenty years ago with the reading of the question on God's existence in the *Summa Theologica*. It was then that the vocation of the philosopher first became clear to me—not irresponsible poetizing, not system building, not the pretensions of a *weltanschauung*, but the plain hard work of demonstration. Unless the philosopher solves problems by laying adequate analytical foundations for demonstration and, in the light thereof, by proving conclusions from self-evident premises, he does nothing.

Though the major part of his own work was theological,<sup>4</sup> St. Thomas has been for me the exemplar of philosophical method. Nevertheless, it seems to me that, in some instances, more work remains to be done on proofs which St. Thomas advanced. A case in point is provided by his arguments for God's existence. What once seemed clear has, in the light of fuller study, become problematic.

I am aware that I am not the first to have encountered difficulties concerning the probative force of the five ways of demonstrating God's existence. Cajetan indicates some of the difficulties by his contention that these arguments do not conclude directly to the existence of the God of revelation, but require interpretation in the light of analysis to be found in questions of the *Summa* which follow the question on the existence of God.<sup>5</sup> Bañez accepts this point of view, but only

reality wholly independent." Cf. *Degrees of Knowledge*, 1938: pp. 58-63, 74-5. Vd. also *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup>Vd. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 2. Maritain observes that "in the Middle Ages philosophy was usually treated as an instrument in the service of theology. Culturally, it was not in the state required by its nature. The coming of a philosophical or profane wisdom which had completed its own formulation, for itself and according to its finalities, responded therefore to an historical necessity. But unfortunately this was accomplished under the emblem of separatism and a sectarian rationalism; Descartes separated philosophy from all higher wisdom, from everything in man which comes from above man. I am certain that what the world and civilization have lacked for three centuries has been a philosophy which would have developed its autonomous exigencies in a Christian climate, a wisdom of reason not closed but open to the wisdom of grace" (from an essay contributed to *Living Philosophies*, ed. by Clifton Fadiman, New York, 1939).

<sup>5</sup>Cajetan, in *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 2, a. 3, n. II: "... primae viae, ex parte

with certain very definite qualifications.<sup>6</sup> At the same time he criticizes Cajetan sharply for leaving the impression that St. Thomas wishes these arguments to be understood in the unamended sense of Aristotle, especially the first two which *appear* to be restricted to corporeal motions.<sup>7</sup> Yet Bañez himself seems to raise a new difficulty when he remarks that the factual sempiternity of contingent beings is compatible with the third argument, as stated by St. Thomas.<sup>8</sup> Difficulties similar to these are reflected in the writings of more recent Thomists.<sup>9</sup> Because of their bearing on my own analysis, I wish to

motus, sat est quod inferatur, *ergo datur primum movens immobile*, non curando utrum illud sit anima caeli aut mundi: hoc enim quaeretur in sequenti quaestione. Secundae quoque viae, ex parte efficientis, sat est quod ducat ad primum efficiens, non curando an illud sit corpus vel incorporeum: hoc enim quaeretur in sequenti quaestione. Tertiae vero viae, ex parte necessarij, sat est quod ducat ad primum necessarium non ex alio, non curando an sit unum vel plura: hoc enim quaeretur in questione xi . . .”

<sup>6</sup> Bañez, in I, q. 2, a. 3, ad 1. arg.: “. . . licet omnes illae rationes simul sumptae non probent immediate et explicate, *Deum esse*, et multo minus Deum esse illud ens perfectissimum, quo perfectius quid excogitari nequit (hoc enim reservatur ad probandum in sequentibus quaestionibus) nihilominus rationes illae efficacissime probent quod in rerum natura reperiuntur perfectiones quaedam, et proprietates, quae alteri quam Deo nequeunt competere, et ex consequenti virtualiter et implicite probant Deum esse.”

<sup>7</sup> Cajetan had said: “Et sic istae rationes habent plurimum disputationis: eo quod prima via, ut in I Contra Gent., cap. xiii, dicitur, non ducit ad motorem magis immobilem quam sit anima intellectiva; secunda autem, . . . non ducit nisi ad corpus caeleste et ejus motorem; . . .” (*loc. cit.*). To which Bañez answers: “. . . si nomine motus solum intelligatur motus physicus, bene dicit Cajetanus quod per illam rationem solum devenitur ad primum motorem, immobilem quidem per se, per accidens tamen potest esse mobilis. Sed non debet sic sumi, sed ut comprehendat etiam motus spirituales et metaphysicos, qualis est quaevis operatio, et etiam quaevis applicatio potentiae spiritualis ad suum actum; . . .” (*loc. cit.*, ad 2 arg.)

<sup>8</sup> Bañez, *loc. cit.*, ad 4 contra tertiam rationem: “. . . ad demonstrationem D. Tho. satis est, si res contingentes ex natura sua non possint semper esse, licet ab extrinseco et par accidens id habeatur: nam ex se sunt indifferentes ad esse et non esse: et ideo ut semper sint, oportet ponere causam necessariam, quae illas reducat in actum.”

<sup>9</sup> Vd. for example, Garrigou-Lagrange, *God, His Existence and His Nature*, St. Louis, 1934: Vol. I. (I shall subsequently comment on the significance of the appendix which is added at the end of this volume.) I should like to add here that my problems concerning the arguments as stated in *Summa Theologica*, I, 2, 3 and

mention here specifically the views of Étienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain.

Gilson has shown that there is no proof for God's existence in Aristotle—neither in Book VIII of the *Physics*, nor in Book XII of the *Metaphysics*.<sup>10</sup> The unmoved mover is not the Uncreated Creator, any more than the demiurge fashioning primordial matter, according to the “likely story” of Plato's *Timaeus*, is the God in which Jews and Christians believe through His revelation of Himself. In this connection it should be noted that St. Thomas explicitly condemned “the error of the ancient physicists . . . who say that God is not the cause of the being of heaven, but only of its movement” (*Contra Gentiles*, II, 15). St. Thomas also knew that the proposition upon which Aristotle's proof depends (that motion is “eternal” in the sense of everlasting, or without beginning and end in time) is neither self-evident nor demonstrable.<sup>11</sup> There is,

in *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13, do not arise from difficulties of the sort which Kant supposed to be insurmountable. Garrigou-Lagrange, it seems to me, has detected Kant's error (vd. *op. cit.*, p. 299 ff.), but in his own formulation of the *a posteriori* argument he does not explicate the reasoning in such a way that some knowledge of *what* God is (including the note of necessity) is openly acknowledged to be prior to the knowledge *that* God is, without undermining the *a posteriori* character of the proof. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 276.

<sup>10</sup> Vd. *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, New York, 1936: Ch. I-III, and esp. pp. 43-51; and also *God and Philosophy*, New Haven, 1941: Ch. I. Vd. *ibid.*, Ch. II, wherein M. Gilson reveals the difficulties which beset the usual rendering of the Thomistic arguments.

<sup>11</sup> In *Contra Gentiles*, I, 15, St. Thomas uses the word “eternal” both in the Aristotelian sense of “without beginning or end in time” and in his own sense of “absolutely timeless”; cf. *Summa Theologica*, I, 10, 3 and 4, which indicate the incompatibility of these two meanings of the word. The so-called “eternity” of the world or of motion is not merely contrary to religious faith (vd. *Summa Theologica*, I, 46, 2); it is, according to St. Thomas, indemonstrable (vd. *ibid.*, I, 46, 1); and he cites an extraordinary passage from Aristotle's *Topics* (I, 2, 104<sup>b</sup> 10-17) which uses the question, whether the universe is eternal or not, as an example of a scientifically insoluble problem.

In view of all this, historical scholarship must try to explain why St. Thomas chose to expand at greatest length in *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13, the first of the five ways, which he derived from Aristotle's *Physics*, Bk. VIII. At the end of this unamended piece of Aristotelian reasoning, St. Thomas acknowledges that this argument “proceeds from the supposition of the eternity of the world, and among Catholics this is a false supposition.” Does the word “proceeds” here mean

furthermore, ample evidence outside of *Summa Theologica*, I, 2, 3, and *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13, to show that St. Thomas's philosophy does not permit a strictly Aristotelian proof of God's existence.

Maritain supports this insight when he points out in his *Degrees of Knowledge* that

. . . whatever the *way* in which it is employed, the consideration of intermediary causes is used in an entirely other fashion by St. Thomas than it is by Aristotle. . . . The Pure Act to whom these ways lead will be explicitly known as the creator, and the creation of things admits of no intermediary (*Sum. Theol.* I, 45, 5). Thus, from the beginning, if St. Thomas shared Aristotle's image of the physical universe, his metaphysics is, on the other hand, from the first line, free of that image.<sup>12</sup>

This is a crucial point in support of the thesis I shall try to develop. If the proof of God's existence must be an argument for the existence of a creative cause—or, more generally, a *cause of being*—then it cannot proceed directly from the facts of motion or of becoming, nor can it proceed through the dependence of secondary causes upon a first cause; for if God is directly and without intermediaries the cause of the being of things, then His existence should be demonstrable directly from *their being*, which is His proper and unique effect. The

"follows as from a premise"? I shall try to show subsequently why the true argument for God's existence must be *compatible with* the false supposition of the world's eternity, but it obviously cannot *follow from* that supposition as a premise.

It is an historical, not a philosophical, question whether St. Thomas thought better of Aristotle than Gilson does. The historian cannot ignore the fact that, in his commentary on *Physics*, VIII (Lect. 2, #5), St. Thomas says: "Plato and Aristotle arrived at knowledge of the source of all being (*principium totius esse*)."<sup>13</sup> I trust the reader will be able to separate the philosophical from the merely scholarly questions that are involved.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 275, fn. 1, Maritain goes on to say that in "the conservation of things, where created causalities have their part, our image of the physical universe fits better than that of Aristotle with St. Thomas's metaphysical doctrine (*Sum. Theol.*, I, 104, 2)." I shall presently try to show that if, according to the text cited, there are secondary and instrumental efficient (*not material*) causes of the preservation of the being of things, then no proof is possible for God's existence. I hold that a proof is possible because I regard what is said in *Sum. Theol.*, I, 104, 2 as inconsistent with St. Thomas's doctrine concerning *causa essendi*.



problem about an infinite series of causes would seem to be irrelevant because, in truth, there is no series at all, not even a finite series having two members.

It may be said that the last two of the five Thomistic arguments do not appeal to the impossibility of an infinite series and that, moreover, these are proofs which have little or no lineage from Aristotle. This, of course, raises the question, often debated by Thomists, whether there are five *logically distinct* proofs. If there can be *only one* logically adequate demonstration of any proposition that is established with certitude—which seems to be St. Thomas's opinion on the matter<sup>13</sup>—then we must ask whether the five arguments stated by St. Thomas are five *ways* of stating the same argument, or whether one of these is the valid proof and the others not, or whether none of these *as written* is strictly a demonstration but only an indication of where a demonstration might lie. These are questions I shall not now answer in detail. The analysis to follow does, I think, determine the answer which must be given.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "In speculative things," says St. Thomas, "the medium of demonstration, which demonstrates the conclusion perfectly, is one only; whereas probable means of proof are many" (*Sum. Th.*, I, 47, 1 ad 3). This logical rule applies to demonstrations *quia* as well as to demonstrations *propter quid*. It does not apply, of course, to reasoning which establishes a conclusion as *probable* (rather than *certain*), for the probability of a conclusion is increased by the number of independent lines of proof corroborating one another. Furthermore, the fact that the same conclusion may be capable of indirect proof (by *reductio ad impossibile*) as well as direct proof does not violate this rule, for the indirect proof is imperfect: it is dialectical rather than scientific, since it appeals to some proposition which the opponent himself affirms, without certifying this proposition in itself. There may also be material diversity which permits one and the same proof to be stated—for rhetorical purposes—in several different ways, but such differences are in language and imagery and in the rhetorical order; they are not differences in the terms whose concatenation establishes the connection between the subject and predicate of the conclusion.

<sup>14</sup> Let me say here at once that the first and second of the five ways are obviously reducible to one another; and that the third way is independent of the first two *only* if it be interpreted, contrary to much of its language, to mean that the existence of possible (i. e., contingent) beings implies the existence of a necessary (i. e., purely actual) being. The actual steps of this argument, following Aristotle's reasoning in *Metaphysics*, XII, 6, do not establish the causal nexus whereby we must infer the existence of a necessary being as the efficient cause of contingent

Before I begin that analysis, I wish to declare as explicitly as possible my firm belief in God's existence and my equally firm conviction that God's existence can be proved by reason without recourse to faith. Though I am not a Catholic, I would say that I hold these things by faith. It is not contradictory to say that I affirm by faith that God's existence can be known to reason without recourse to faith; nor does it in any way indicate a lack of such faith for an individual to admit that he does not *yet* know by reason what his faith affirms *can* be so known.<sup>15</sup> St. Thomas's explanation of why the proposition "God exists" is both a rational conclusion and an

beings; furthermore, because it uses the word "necessary" to name the merely incorruptible as well as the purely actual, the argument is forced to fall back upon the impossibility of an infinite series of necessary beings, each one caused by another. As it stands, this third way adds little to the first two. The fifth way does not seem to me to be a demonstration of God's existence, but rather of God's providence, as will be seen by a consideration of its terms in the light of Q. 22 on the providence of God. The teleological fact that everything has an *immanent* final cause of motion does not imply the existence of a *transcendent* final cause. That wherever there is a nature, be it unintelligent or intelligent, there natural appetite tends toward an end, does not by itself prove the existence of an efficient cause of being or of natures. Unless it can be *independently* shown that the observed natures must be created, whatever characteristics *follow* from these natures will not demand the existence of a creator.

Of the five ways, the fourth seems to me the nearest approach to a valid argument for God's existence. This argument will be found better stated in *De Pot.*, 3, 5 than in *Sum. Th.*, I, 2, 3. It is this argument which Maritain rephrases, with different imagery, in *Degrees of Knowledge*, pp. 274-6. But neither Maritain's statement nor the statement in *De Pot.*, 3, 5 faces the difficulties inherent in the unstated major premise on which the proof rests.

The analysis to follow will show why, in terms of Thomistic principles, the first two ways cannot be used to prove God's existence. Since the proof must be in terms of efficient, not final, causality, and from the causation of being, not of becoming, the outlines of a proof can be drawn from some elements in the third way combined with the basic insight expressed in the fourth way. The proof thus outlined must then be tested by examining the truth of the major and minor premises.

<sup>15</sup> The Vatican Council declared that God "can be known with certitude by the natural light of human reason, by means of created things," to which declaration of faith, they added the canon: "If any one shall say that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be certainly known by the natural light of human reason through created things; let him be anathema." Vd. H. Denzinger and J. Umberg, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, Nos. 1785 and 1806.

article of faith applies perfectly to the fact that the proposition "God's existence can be demonstrated" is both a matter of faith and open to reason's ascertainment.<sup>16</sup>

The faith that God's existence can be proved is needed by those who do not yet know the demonstration and who, because believing in God's existence and benevolence toward man, might wonder whether God created man with a natural endowment for knowledge of divine things. It is also needed by those who, thinking they have demonstrated a truth, nevertheless remember the fallibility and pitfalls of any merely human reasoning, and so have recourse to the certitude of faith that what they have *tried* to prove *can be* proved, even if their most elaborate and diligent efforts have, from some human weakness, failed of perfection. But, above all, it seems to me, faith that a proof of God's existence is *attainable* is needed to sustain all those who desire to know whatever can be known of God by natural reason in this life; it is needed to sustain them in this most arduous of all intellectual efforts, to help them to persist in pursuit of a proof, despite all the obstacles,

<sup>16</sup> Vd. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 4: We must show, says St. Thomas, that certain truths are fittingly proposed by God as an object of belief. "We must first show this with regard to that truth which is attainable by the inquiry of reason, lest it appear to some, that since it can be attained by reason, it was useless to make it an object of faith by supernatural knowledge. Now three disadvantages would result if this truth were left solely to the inquiry of reason. One is that few men would have knowledge of God, because very many are hindered from gathering the fruit of diligent inquiry, which is the discovery of truth." Here St. Thomas enumerates three obstacles to the discovery of truth which operate *ut in pluribus*. "The second disadvantage is that those who would arrive at the discovery of the aforesaid truth would not succeed in doing so for a long time. . . . The third disadvantage is that much falsehood is mingled with the investigations of human reason, on account of the weakness of our intellect in forming its judgments, and by reason of the admixture of phantasms. Consequently many would remain in doubt about even those things which are truly demonstrated, through ignoring the force of the demonstration, especially when they perceive that different things are taught by the various men who are called wise. Moreover among the many demonstrated truths, there is sometimes a mixture of falsehood that is not demonstrated, but assumed for some probable or sophistical reason which at times is mistaken for a demonstration. Therefore it was necessary that definite certainty and pure truth about divine things should be offered to man by the way of faith."

despite all the controversies of men and the failures of the past, despite all the *apparent insolubilia*.<sup>17</sup>

In view of this, I hope that I will not be accused of undue temerity because I here set forth the difficulties which it seems to me must be overcome in any *purely philosophical* proof of God's existence. I shall first try to show the critical impact of St. Thomas's own theory of causality upon the usual rendering of the arguments about God's existence. Such criticism, it will be seen, everywhere appeals to Thomistic principles, and never to anything extrinsic or foreign. Then I shall try to proceed constructively toward the statement of a proof which satisfies all the critical conditions imposed upon the undertaking by St. Thomas's own theory of causality. Since the best statement I can make is not free from difficulties, I shall conclude with a summary of what has been seen, and an intimation of what remains to be done.

## II

For brevity's sake, let me present in outline form the several critical points which impose antecedent limitations upon any attempt to prove God's existence.

<sup>17</sup> In considering St. Thomas's *actual statement* of the arguments for God's existence, we must remember two things: first, that in the cultural circumstances of his time, he was the great polemicist for the genuine worth of purely philosophical wisdom; second, that he himself, nevertheless, wrote as a theologian, not as a philosopher. Vd. fn. 4 *supra*. The first fact may help to explain why he defended Aristotle as the symbol of Philosophy, why he took arguments from Aristotle which later criticism has questioned. The second fact is even more important, because it calls our attention to an insoluble rhetorical problem. The proof of God's existence is a work of *natural* theology, and in the proper order of natural learning, it can come only at the very end of metaphysics—it can be understood only after much prior analysis has prepared the way. But in an orderly exposition of *dogmatic* theology, according to the order of the articles of faith, the question about God's existence must come at the very beginning, where an adequate statement of the proof cannot possibly be made. If, by accident, anyone were to read Part I of the *Summa Theologica* but skipping Question 2, and then were to return to Question 2 after having mastered the basic metaphysical points concerning being and becoming, causality, etc., such a person would see at once why the proof of God's existence could not be written—i. e., adequately expounded—in Q. 2, A. 3.



1. For any given effect, there are the following causal possibilities.
  - a. Either one efficient cause only or many are productive of the effect. (In connection with a *posteriori* reasoning, only efficient causes need be considered.)
  - b. If many, then
    - (1) Either the number is finite or infinite;
    - (2) Either the many causes are ordered to one another by succession in time or they are simultaneously cooperative and, as conjoined in action, they must be co-existent.
  - c. We know at once that an infinite number of cooperative causes is impossible, because an actual infinite, that is, an infinite multitude of co-existent things, is impossible.
  - d. But we also must concede that an infinite number of successive causes is possible, for the possibility of such a series is the possibility of an infinite time, time without beginning or end, and this is a potential and not an actual infinite. (Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 7, aa. 3, 4.)
  - e. I shall henceforth use the word "series" only for a plurality of causes ordered successively to one another; and I shall use the word "set" for a plurality of cooperative causes.
2. The possibility of an infinite series of efficient causes, each a mover and a thing moved, or each a generator and a generated thing, must be conceded because the proposition that the world is "eternal" (i. e., of infinite duration) is neither self-evidently nor demonstrably false. (Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 46, aa. 1, 2; *II Con. Gen.*, 31-38; esp. Ch. 38, wherein St. Thomas says: "It is impossible to have an infinite number of active causes which act together simultaneously, or an infinite number of simultaneous actions. Such are causes that are *per se* infinite, because their infinity is required for their effect. On the other hand, in causes which do not act simultaneously, this is not impossible, according to those who assert that generation has always been.")
  - a. Hence no argument for the existence of God is valid which appeals to the impossibility of an infinite *series* of efficient causes (or of movers and things moved); even as no argument is valid which rests upon the premise that the world or motion is "eternal"; for the one falsely denies what is possible, and the other affirms to be true what is neither self-evident nor demonstrable.

- b. When it is said that "in efficient causes it is impossible to proceed to infinity *per se* because there cannot be an infinite number of causes that are *per se* required for a certain effect" (*Sum. Th.*, I, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7), it is suggested that a plurality of essential causes cannot be infinite because such causes must be simultaneous in action and co-existent in being. (Vd. the passage from *II Con. Gen.*, 38, cited above.) This requires further examination.
3. The distinction between a plurality of causes *per se* and an accidental plurality of causes must be understood as a distinction between a plurality of causes which differ from one another in *essence* and a plurality of causes which differ only numerically or *accidentally*.
- a. In the potentially infinite series of fathers and sons, one generator differs from another accidentally or numerically, not essentially.
- b. In the plurality of causes productive of an artistic effect, the physical thing (e.g., the stick which moves the stone), the living bodily member (e.g., the hand), and the psychic powers (e.g., reason and will) differ from one another essentially.
- c. But the distinction between an essential and an accidental plurality of causes is not identical with the distinction between a *set* of (cooperative) causes and a *series* of (successive) causes;
- (1) For in a set of cooperative causes, some of the members may differ only accidentally, as, for example, two sticks simultaneously used to move a stone;
  - (2) And in a series of successive causes, some of the members may differ essentially, as, for example, the man who at an earlier time trained the dog to carry a burden, that operation being performed at a later time.
- d. Hence it cannot be said that an infinity of causes is possible *because* they differ accidentally, for that possibility depends not on their being accidentally different, but upon their being serially ordered in succession; nor can it be said that an infinity of essential causes is impossible, *unless* these causes are ordered to one another as members of a cooperative set. A particular series of causes may have a finite number of essentially different members, but this does not exclude the *possibility* of an infinite number. An infinite regression is always possible in a *series* of causes—whether these causes be essentially or accidentally different.

- e. It follows, therefore, that the impossibility of a plurality of causes "that are *per se* infinite" must be understood as the impossibility of an infinite set of causes—impossible because as cooperative "their infinity is required for their effect."
- 4. We have seen that essentially differentiated causes may be ordered in two ways: either successively or simultaneously. This fact determines a distinction between causes applicable only to a number of causes which are essentially different. That distinction is between higher and lower causes, each of which is a principal cause of *its own* proximate effect, and higher and lower causes, one of which is the principal and another the instrumental cause of *their common* proximate effect.
  - a. Wherever there is essential diversity, there is hierarchical gradation. The words "higher" and "lower" are to be understood in terms of such gradation.
  - b. In a *series* of essentially diverse causes (be it finite or infinite), a higher can be distinguished from a lower cause as a primary principal cause from a secondary principal cause. (Vd. Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, New York: 1940, pp. 193 ff.) Only if such a series is *known* to be finite, and not from the supposition that all such series must be finite, can it be said that there is a *first* principal cause. Here the word "first" has its proper ordinal significance, meaning that before which in the series there is no prior member.
  - c. In a *set* of essentially diverse causes (always necessarily finite), a higher cause can be distinguished from a lower cause as a principal from an instrumental cause. Unlike primary and secondary principal causes, each of which has *its own* proximate effect, a principal and an instrumental cause cooperate to produce *one and the same* proximate effect.
  - d. In a *set* of essentially diverse causes, there may be more than one principal cause, for any cause except the highest or the lowest in the set may be both instrumental in relation to a higher cause and principal in relation to a lower cause. But the highest principal cause cannot be called a "first cause" in the same ordinal sense in which "first" is said of the prime member of a series. Nevertheless, it remains true that just as we know there is a *first* principal cause if the series of essentially diverse causes be finite, so we know that there must be a *highest* principal cause in any set of causes related as principal and instrumental, because any *set* of causes must be finite.

5. Our analysis so far has eliminated two possibilities of demonstrating the existence of God as a cause required for effects known to exist; and we must, therefore, inquire whether a third possibility that has been indicated remains tenable.
  - a. The first possibility was that in *any series* of causes, *without regard* for the distinction between accidental and essential diversity among the members, there must be a first or uncaused efficient cause. This was eliminated in 2. above.
  - b. The second possibility was that in a *series* of essentially diverse causes, there must be a first or uncaused efficient cause. This was eliminated in 3. above.
  - c. The remaining possibility, indicated in 4. above, is that in a *set* of essentially diverse causes, there must always exist a *highest* principal cause, and this is God, whose existence was to be proved. But, as I shall now attempt to show, this possibility is not tenable either.
  - d. Before that can be shown, one further point must be noted, namely, that all the distinctions among efficient causes which we have been considering are relevant *only* to efficient causes of becoming (whether the becoming is *simpliciter* as in substantial change or *secundum quid* as in the several accidental motions). In the *efficient* causation of being (i. e., of existence itself), there can be no plurality of causes: there is neither a series of such causes nor a set of such causes, and so there is no secondary principal cause of being and no instrumental cause of being. Hence to argue that God cannot be proved as a *first* cause or as a *principal* cause is only to argue that God cannot be proved as *causa fiendi*; it does not mean that God cannot be proved as *causa essendi*.<sup>18</sup>
6. That God cannot be proved as the highest principal cause of any known effect in the order of becoming does not involve the denial of God's efficient causality in the production of every effect which occurs in the course of worldly motions and genera-

<sup>18</sup> Neither can Aristotle's "prime mover" be proved to exist from the *known facts* of motion, for the "prime mover" is a *causa fiendi*, and no transcendent *causa fiendi* can be inferred from the cognate facts of motion, or proved to exist by *a posteriori* reasoning. Vd. #6 and 7 *infra*. Hence it is impossible to demonstrate God's existence in two separate steps, the first of which proves the existence of a prime mover as *first* cause *in fieri*; and the second of which proves that the prime mover is really God as the *only* cause *in esse*. This has an obvious bearing on the efforts by Cajetan and Bañez to interpret the first two of the five Thomistic arguments. Cf. fn. 5 and 7 *supra*.



tions. *After* we know that God exists, and something of His essence and power, we can learn of His operation in the *occurrence* of every *event* which *happens* in this world. But from the occurrence of such events, from worldly motions and generations, we cannot infer God's existence as an indispensable efficient cause, cooperating as *causa fiendi* with other causes of becoming, and related to them as principal to instrumental cause in the set of causes productive of each particular effect. The reasons for this are as follows:

- a. From the point of view of our knowledge, there are two situations in which an effect is produced by the cooperation of principal and instrumental causes.
  - (1) One is the situation in which all the causes are known to us as cognate objects of knowledge, as, for example, in the aetiology of an artistic product. In such cases, our study of the causal nexus may instruct us as to the order of the causes, which is principal and which instrumental, but since the causes are known or knowable to us apart from the effect, we need not infer the existence of any of these causes from the effect.
  - (2) The other is the situation in which not all the causes are known to us as cognate objects. In this case, whatever cause is a transcendent object cannot be known to exist apart from its effect—its existence being knowable only by inference from effects. Clearly God is such a transcendent object, whose existence must be proved by a *posteriori* inference from His effects.
- b. Now when an effect is not the *proper* (i. e., unique, exclusive) effect of a single cause, but the effect of cooperative action on the part of several causes related as principal and instrumental, it is impossible to infer from the effect the existence of any cause which is not knowable apart from the effect.
  - (1) According to St. Thomas, natural agents are genuinely efficacious as efficient causes of becoming. (Vd. *III Con. Gen.*, 69.) If this were not so, "all knowledge of physical science would be denied to us" (*loc. cit.*).
  - (2) But St. Thomas also holds that *the same effect* (in the order of becoming) is both from God and from the natural agent—"not as though part were effected by God and part by the natural agent; but the whole effect proceeds from each, yet in different ways, just as the whole of one same effect is ascribed to the instrument,

and again the whole is ascribed to the principal agent " (*ibid.*, 70).

- (3) Hence since the whole effect can be ascribed to the natural agent, as is done in the science of physical things, we are not compelled to infer the existence of God in order to give an adequate causal explanation of the effect. But we can only know the existence of a transcendent object if a known effect cannot be causally explained without positing this object as its cause. Hence we cannot infer the existence of God from any effect (in the order of becoming) with respect to which God is only the principal cause, but not the unique or exclusive cause, as He is in the case of being which is His proper effect. We cannot know that the natural agent is related to God as instrumental to principal cause in the production of a natural effect (i. e., a generation or a motion) *until we know that God exists*.
  - (4) With one exception, nothing that has here been said is inconsistent with St. Thomas's whole theory of principal and instrumental causality. Vd. *Sum. Th.* I, q. 105, a. 5; III, q. 62, a. 1; I, q. 45, a. 5; *II Con. Gen.*, 21: III, 69, 70; *De Pot.*, 3, 7. The one exception is my insistence that there is no instrumental cause of being, which St. Thomas *appears* to contradict when he says that God does not preserve the being of every creature *immediately*, but rather through the operation of subordinate causes. Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 2. I shall return to this point presently.
- c. If it be objected that natural things do not operate except in terms of their natures, which they themselves do not cause, and hence the fact of their causal operation implies the existence of that which causes their natures, two points must be made in reply.
- (1) God as the cause of the *natures* of natural agents is not the principal cause of the effects of their action, for to cause the nature of a thing, to give it its form, or its form *and* matter, is to cause its *being*, not its becoming. (On this, St. Thomas speaks plainly in *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 1.) Hence though the facts of becoming may lead us to ask whence comes the being of the things which are both causes and effects in the order of becoming, this does not lead us to infer God's existence as a principal *causa fiendi*.

- (2) That things *exist* (have being) as well as *become* (are subject to change) may require us to look for the cause of their essences and existences, as well as for the cause of each becoming that occurs, but it remains to be seen whether the existence and causality of God affords the only explanation for the existence and natures of things. That is precisely the problem of proving God's existence, which remains to be solved.

7. The preceding analysis compels us to admit that God cannot be proved as *causa fiendi* of known effects. We are thus brought to the conclusion that the *only* way in which God can be proved is as *causa essendi*—as the cause of the being of things, not of their changes. Moreover, this way does not, like the other ways, turn out upon examination to be unavailable, due to the character of the causal nexus involved. This is confirmed by St. Thomas's insight into the character of *being* as an effect.

- a. We are told that being is the *proper* effect of God. Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 8, a. 1; q. 19, a. 5, ad 3; q. 45, a. 5; q. 65, a. 3; q. 104, a. 1; *II Con. Gen.*, 6, 15, 17-21.
- b. Primarily, we understand from this that to cause being is to create, and that creation is neither movement nor change, and that in creation there is no succession. (I shall subsequently consider the *causa essendi* as preserving being.)
- c. Furthermore, in creation there are no intermediary causes, no secondary principal and no instrumental causes. Hence, to say that being is the *proper* effect of God means that God is the *unique and exclusive* cause of being, as He is the sole creative cause.
- d. If these things be so, then it should be possible to prove God's existence as the cause of the being of whatever needs to have its being caused, for here we are dealing with an effect which can have only one cause. Hence we should not be involved in all the problems about finite and infinite series, primary and secondary, principal and instrumental causes, which arise wherever a plurality of causes is possible.
- e. But all these points about the causation of being are made by St. Thomas *after* he has offered arguments for God's existence, four of which do not seem to prove God as the *direct* cause of His *proper* effect. If, because of this, these arguments do not demonstrate God's existence, it may be possible, nevertheless, to formulate the one remaining argument in such a way that it is valid inference from *being* as

an effect to its cause. It is certainly not sufficient to try to read into the arguments *as written* the force of the basic insight that God is the *sole* cause of being, His *proper* effect, for the notion of a *proper* effect, an effect due to a unique cause, does not occur in the reasoning, and is violated by every reference to God as a "first" cause, implying a plurality of causes. (God can be called a "first cause" only in the sense that being, as prior to becoming, is a *first effect*. Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 19, a. 5, ad 3: "Since God wills effects to come from causes, all effects that presuppose some other effect do not depend solely on the will of God, but on something else besides, but the first effect depends on the divine will alone.") Garrigou-Lagrange recognizes the crucial significance of the notion of being as God's *proper* effect, but tries vainly to render the traditional arguments in the light of this notion; whereas it is obvious that, in doing so, he departs from the arguments *as written* and approaches the formulation of a single proof which is none of the five ways. (Vd. *op. cit.*, Appendix, pp. 379-90.) I leave to the reader to judge how nearly his *approach* and mine converge.

8. In attempting to prove God as the unique cause of the being of things, it is necessary to remember that such causality is compatible with two possibilities, neither of which can be proved or disproved: the possibility of an "eternal" world, and the possibility of a world which began to be.
  - a. If it were supposed that the only sense in which God is the cause of being is equivalent to the usual meaning of "creation"—namely, causing the world to *begin* to be (vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 66, aa. 1, 4, on the creation of time)—then the irrefutable possibility that things never began to be would entail the consequence that an everlasting world does not have a cause of being. On the contrary, if things are contingent in being, it would seem that they must have a cause of being, whether or not the whole order of contingent things has or has not always existed.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The word "creation" is ambiguously used, when it is sometimes used to mean *both* the causation of being *and* the definite origin of what is thus caused; and sometimes to mean *only* the causation of being without specifying whether what is thus caused to be ever *began* to be or *always* existed. When "creation" is used with both notes, it is contradictory to speak of a "created eternal world," for if the created is what has a definite beginning, it cannot also be everlasting or without beginning. When "creation" is used with only one note (omitting the notion



- b. Now if we assume the truth of the second possibility, which is assuming that the world was created, there is no way of proving God's existence, for we have assumed it, and the same proposition cannot be both assumed and proved. The fact of creation is inseparable from the fact of a Creator; hence to assume the one is to assume the other.
- c. Furthermore, the fact of creation (i. e., the fact of an absolute beginning of the world) cannot be proved, but must either be assumed by reason or known to faith. Hence the existence of a Creator (in the sense indicated) must either be assumed by reason or known to faith. It cannot be proved.
- d. Therefore, it is necessary to proceed in terms of the other possibility (i. e., a world without beginning), and show that such a world, at every instant and in every particular, needs a cause of its being, which is itself uncaused in being. This procedure has two merits.

(1) St. Thomas says that "the most effective way to prove

of a beginning), then the phrase "created eternal world" is not contradictory, because an everlasting world, without beginning or end, may nevertheless be contingent in its being *at every moment* and so at every moment require the action of an efficient cause of being.

For analytical clarity, it is absolutely necessary to use the word "creation" in one sense, and one sense only. Despite the fact that scholastic theology has always used the word ambiguously, playing back and forth from one meaning to the other as the occasion demands, I am compelled to resolve the ambiguity in order to avoid analytical confusion, and I shall do so by using the word with these two notes in its signification: (a) to create is to cause being; (b) to create is to cause to begin to be—understanding such "beginning," of course, as neither a change nor a motion of any kind. There seem to me several good reasons for making this choice. In the first place, the note of origin or beginning enters into the usual theological sense of the word "creation" when, in the light of faith, God is called "creator," for by faith it is known that God not only is the cause of the world's being, but is also the cause of its beginning to be. In the second place, to use the word "creation" with *only* the first note—(a) above—in its signification, is to say that God is creating the world at every instant, and this does some violence to discourse. And in the third place, to use the word "creation" with only the (a) note is to make the word synonymous with "cause of being," in which case, it would be impossible to distinguish between God's creative and God's preservative action, for in both God acts as an efficient cause of being. Hence, in order to use the word "preservation" with a meaning clearly distinct from "creation," I shall use both words to signify "cause of being" (this is their common note), but I shall use "creation" with the additional and distinctive note—(b) above—namely, to signify "cause of beginning to be." In terms of such verbal usage, there should be no difficulty about understanding what is meant by saying that

God's existence is from the supposition of the eternity of the world, which being supposed, it seems less manifest that God exists" (*I Con. Gen.*, 13). I would go further and say that no other way is possible. And I must also point out that the supposition of the eternity of the world is not a premise in the demonstration itself, as it is in the Aristotelian argument on which St. Thomas is here commenting.

- (2) Supposing the eternity of the world, the demonstration abstracts from all temporal series, and proceeds to infer God's existence as *causa essendi* directly from the present existence of a single contingent thing.
9. Finally, we must observe two ways in which an efficient cause of being can act: CREATIVELY, by placing something *extra nihil* and *extra causas*; PRESERVATIVELY, by sustaining in being whatever does not exist by its own essence. In either case, the effect produced by the cause of being is *the actual existence of a possible being*, or of a series of such beings if they are the generable and corruptible members of a species. (Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 65, a. 9, ad 1 on annihilation vs. corruption.) This is important, because on the supposition of the world's eternity, we cannot prove God as a creative, but only as a preservative, cause of being. Therefore, we must overcome the difficulty raised by St. Thomas's statement that in the preservation of beings God operates through intermediate causes (vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 2).
- a. If this were so, then the being of things would not be the *proper* effect of God's action; and as we have seen the ex-

God can be the cause of being of either an everlasting world or a world with beginning, but he cannot be the "creative" cause of an everlasting world, though he can be its "preservative" cause, if it is the sort of world which requires a cause of its being.

The analytical points that are involved remain exactly the same, however one uses words. There are four: (1) that an everlasting world may be either one which is caused in being or one which is uncaused in being; (2) that a world which is caused in being may be either an everlasting world or one with a definite beginning; (3) that a world which is uncaused in being cannot have a beginning, but must be everlasting; and (4) that a world which has a beginning cannot be uncaused in being. We can never know by reason whether the world did or did not have a beginning; but we can know by reason that the world requires a cause for its being whether it is everlasting or had a beginning. We must, therefore, *prove* God's existence without *assuming* that the world had a beginning, and in a way that is *compatible* with the contrary assumption.

istence of a transcendent cause can be proved only from its *proper* effect, the effect which it alone directly causes.

- b. But there are many passages in which St. Thomas seems to take a contrary position. In *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 8, he says that God is in all things by His power, causing the being of things "not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being." And "it belongs to the great power of God that He acts immediately in all things" (*ibid.*, ad 3). In *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 45, a. 5, he says that God alone can create and therefore acts creatively without intermediary causes of any sort; following which, in *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 1, ad 4, he writes: "The preservation of things by God is a continuation of that action whereby He gives existence, which action is without either motion or time." Hence it would seem that just as God gives existence by direct causal action (creatively) so, acting preservatively, He sustains existence in the same way. But this is contradicted by the statement that "a thing is kept in being by that which gives it being. But God gives being by means of certain intermediate causes. Therefore, He also keeps things in being by means of certain causes" (*Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 2, *per contra*).
- c. The contradiction could be easily resolved, were it merely *apparent* and due to verbal ambiguity. In q. 104, a. 1, St. Thomas indicates two distinct meanings of the word "preserves"—one, to sustain in existence as such, the other, to counteract causes tending toward a thing's corruption. In the first meaning, to preserve a thing is to operate as *causa essendi*, in the second, to preserve is to operate as *causa fiendi*. But in q. 104, a. 2, St. Thomas, referring back to both of these meanings, says: "In both ways, a created thing keeps another in being." Since the contradiction is not apparent, but real, we must resolve it by making a choice between conflicting texts. In view of the fact that the only *relevant* illustration given in q. 104, a. 2 is of the action whereby corruptibles are preserved from corruption, and in view of the greater weight of all the contrary texts, I choose to take the position that only God preserves in being, as only God creates, and that whatever action hinders corruption, like any action affecting generation, operates only as a *causa fiendi*. This is not to deny that, with respect to corruption as with respect to generation, the Divine power may cooperate with natural agents, or may appoint

secondary principal agents, to work an effect; but since the effect is a change (whether produced or prevented) God does not thus act as *causa essendi*. In what follows, I shall always use the word "preserve" to signify the action of a *causa essendi*, and never to signify the action of a *causa fiendi*.

- d. The position I have taken is confirmed by the distinction St. Thomas makes between the work of creation and the work of propagation. (Vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 69, a. 2; q. 73, aa. 1, 2; q. 74, a. 2.) With respect to things generable and corruptible, God creates the species, not the individual; only self-subsistent things are created as individuals. Hence, since the preservation of things in being is a continuation of God's creative action, as the generation of new individuals is not, God preserves in being only what He creates: self-subsistent individuals, and the *series* of generable and corruptible things which constitutes the endurance of a species.
  - e. We can conclude, therefore, that a *causa essendi*, whether it acts creatively or preservatively, acts directly in the production of its effect. Furthermore, whatever holds for the creative action of a *causa essendi* holds for its preservative action: thus, if it is true that no natural agent can create, it must be similarly true that no natural agent can preserve the being of either a self-subsistent individual or a species. The fact that St. Thomas uses the prejaacent matter of a work of art as an example of *causa essendi*, in contradistinction to the artist's activity as *causa fiendi* (vd. *Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 1) does not violate this point, because the wood is the material cause of the chair's *being*, as any substance is the material cause of its accidents' *being*, and we are here considering God as *efficient causa essendi*. Furthermore, accidents need only a material cause for their existence, though an efficient cause for their becoming, whereas substances need an efficient cause both for their being and their becoming.
10. All this being so, it should be possible to prove the existence of God, even on the supposition that nothing is created. That possibility lies in the conception of being as the *proper* effect of a unique cause, an effect incapable of being produced (whether creatively or preservatively) by either a *series* or a *set* of causes. If this conception is sound, then there will be no difficulty in showing that this unique cause is God, by whom everything needs to be preserved, since "not for a moment could it



subsist, but would fall into nothingness, were it not kept in being by the operation of the Divine power" (*Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 1). But in that "if" lies the problem of proving God's existence. Is this conception sound? Is it true, in short, that one contingent being cannot be the *efficient* cause of another's being?

### III

Nothing so far said provides the proof of God's existence. Many propositions have been made about the Divine causality *in fieri*, but none of these can be affirmed as true by reason until the existence and character of God as a cause is proved *a posteriori* from our knowledge of the world. So far I have merely set forth the conditions which causal theory imposes upon a *a posteriori* inference from cognate effects to a transcendent cause. Thus we have determined the several ways in which God *cannot* be proved, and we have come at last to the one possibility of a demonstration which satisfies all the prerequisite conditions.

That one possibility can be formulated in the following syllogism (hypothetical, as every *a posteriori* syllogism must be).

MAJOR: IF anything exists whose continuation in existence requires the operation of an efficient cause at this very moment, THEN a being exists whose existence is uncaused.

#### DEFINITIONS:

- (1) By "contingent being" I understand that which requires the operation of an efficient cause for perseverance in being at any moment, and this may be either a self-subsistent entity or the series of generable and corruptible things constituting a species. Another name for contingent being is "*ens ab alio*," and *ens ab alio* is equivalent in meaning to "caused being" which, in turn, is equivalent in meaning to "that whose essence is not its existence."
- (2) By "necessary being" I understand, not an incorruptible being, but an uncaused being. Another name for necessary being is, therefore, "*ens a se*" and this is equivalent in meaning to "that whose essence is its existence."
- (3) By "corporeal substance" I understand not merely *ens per se*, but a corruptible individual, and therefore an

entity which, participating in the contingent being of the species to which it belongs, is *ens ab alio*.

- (4) By "God" I understand a necessary being or *ens a se*.

MINOR: Corporeal substances *do* exist.

CONCLUSION: THEREFORE, God *does* exist.

With regard to this, as with any other proffered demonstration, the conclusion remains problematic until the premises can be affirmed. The problematic character of the conclusion can, therefore, be understood in terms of whatever problems or difficulties attach to the premises. Let me outline the problems which must be solved before the conclusion "God exists" can be regarded as demonstrated.

1. *With respect to the minor premise.*

- a. That a plurality of corporeal substances *does* exist is not self-evident to reason, nor is it evident to sensitive intellection. That a numerical diversity exists is evident, but this evident truth will not function as the minor premise; for supposing all these to be accidents, the existence of *one* substance will suffice to explain their being. From *ens per aliud*, one can only infer *ens per se*, not *ens a se*.
- b. Furthermore, while it is true that *ens per aliud* implies *ens per se*, so that if anything at all exists (which is a fact directly evident to our sensitive intellection), substance must exist, it does not follow that there exists a plurality of individual substances, which as the generable and corruptible members of a species show themselves to have contingent being. From the existence of accidents, all that can be proved is the existence of *one* substance and *only one*, which will then be both *per se* and *a se*. This is the fallacious reasoning of Spinoza; it results in the denial of a transcendent God, but it cannot be avoided if the ultimate fact appealed to is simply the evident existence of something.
- c. The evident fact of motion or accidental change is the starting point from which, in my opinion, it can be proved that a plurality of corporeal substances exists. The proof is too difficult to state here, but I think it can be validly made against objections of the sort raised by followers of Spinoza, Hegel, or Whitehead. Unless it can, God's existence cannot be proved, because if we cannot prove the existence of cor-

ruptible substances, we certainly cannot prove the existence of incorruptible substances, and without knowledge that there is *ens per se et ab alio* we cannot infer *ens a se*. Thus we see how the fact of motion is relevant, not as the minor premise in the proof of God's existence, but as the minor premise in the proof of corruptible substances, which conclusion is the minor premise in the proof of God.

2. *With respect to the definition of God.*

- a. The word "definition" is, of course, being used loosely, for God is indefinable *secundum se* as well as *quoad nos*. But in order to prove the existence of something, we must have at least a nominal definition of that thing—we must be able to express with some definiteness the conceptual medium through which the name signifies. Furthermore, we cannot learn what meaning to attach to the name "God" from an *a posteriori* demonstration of His existence. Unless prior to the demonstration itself the name "God" signifies for us a necessary being, one whose essence is its existence, we cannot say, after we have proved that a being exists *a se*, that this being is God. The name "God" may mean more than this: it may mean for us an infinite, perfect, immutable, eternal being. If it be asked how we are able to "conceive" God by an enumeration of such notes, before we have proved that God exists, and *supposedly* deduced other propositions about His nature, the answer is that we conceive God by negation and remotion from corporeal things. We know what such things are; we know that if God is, He must be as *unlike* these things as possible, and so by negating the characteristics of things, we construct—not abstract—a notion of God. Of the various negative notes which enter therein, it so happens that only one is useful in the proof of God's existence, for since the proof is from effect to cause, in the sphere of being, one of the terms in the major premise must be "uncaused being."
- b. A difficulty arises here with the Kantian charge that if in order to prove God *a posteriori*, one must first conceive Him as a necessary being, a being whose essence is its existence, then from such knowledge of His essence, His existence is self-evident, and the ontological argument is covertly present, invalidating the demonstration. The objection can, I think, be overcome in two ways: first, by pointing out that a nominal definition does not give us knowledge of the Divine essence; second, by showing that the process by which we attach meaning to the name "God"—the process of

*constructing* a notion negatively—merely enables us to *think* of a possibility, even though that possibility is the possibility of a necessary being. It is a *logical* possibility, by which we mean that the constructed notion is not self-contradictory, in which case it would be a logical impossibility. But although we know that a logical impossibility *cannot* exist, we do not know that a logical possibility *does* exist. Hence, prior to the proof that a necessary being *does* exist, the existence of a necessary being is, so far as our knowledge goes, merely a logical possibility. Should no proof be available, the notion of a necessary being would still remain a logical possibility, for while it is self-contradictory to say that a *real* being whose essence is its existence does not exist, it is not self-contradictory to say that we do not know whether there *is* a *real* being which corresponds to our *ideal* construction. It should be noted, furthermore, that the modality of our conclusion is assertoric, not apodictic: we cannot ever conclude an *a posteriori* argument with a “must” proposition. This fact completely refutes the Kantian charge, for if the ontological argument were involved, the contradictory of the conclusion would be impossible, and hence the conclusion would be a necessary proposition. But “a necessary being *does* exist” is not a necessary proposition, *as we know it*.

- c. There is one other problem here, namely, whether the other negative notes in our understanding of God can be demonstrated once we have proved that a necessary being does exist. An “unmoved mover” would seem to be an immutable being, but is a necessary being immutable, infinite, unique? How do we know, for example, from our proof that a necessary being exists, that *only one* such being exists? And unless we know that, have we proved God’s existence? I shall return to this problem presently in another connection.
3. *With respect to the major premise.*
    - a. The inescapable problem here is presented by the dilemma that the major premise must either be self-evident or demonstrable. But which? Let me consider each alternative briefly.
    - b. A proposition is self-evident if its truth is known immediately upon an understanding of its terms. To test the major premise for self-evidence, let me state it in such a way that its terms are emphasized: “the existence of a contingent being (*ens ab alio*)—*implies*—the existence of



a necessary being (*ens a se*).” I have italicized the word “implies” to indicate that, even though I have avoided the words “if” and “then,” my proposition remains hypothetical: it is certainly not a categorical predication. Now the terms to be examined are obviously “contingent being” and “necessary being.”

- (1) In order for the proposition to be self-evident, we would have to understand *contingent being* as (a) that which needs a cause for its existence and (b) that which cannot cause the existence of any other thing; and we would have to understand *necessary being* as (a) that which needs no cause for its existence and (b) that which can cause the existence of anything contingent. If both notes—(a) and (b)—are involved in our understanding of these two terms, then it is self-evident that the existence of a contingent being, which must be caused and cannot be caused by another contingent being, *implies* the existence of a necessary being which need not be caused and can cause the existence of a contingent being.
  - (2) But do our conceptions of contingent and necessary being involve the note I have marked as (b) in each case? (If not, the proposition is not self-evident.) The question can be asked another way: what in our understanding of *esse* and *causa essendi* requires us to see that *ens ab alio* cannot be *causa essendi*, that only *ens a se* can?
  - (3) The metaphysical problem here envisaged is so difficult that I dare say only that I do not know the answer, adding that if the answer is given by scholastic metaphysics, I am unacquainted with the texts in St. Thomas or others, which contain the problem's solution. Obviously it will not do in *natural* theology to appeal to knowledge by faith. We may know by faith that God is Creator, and thus be enabled to see that only the Creator can be *causa essendi*; but apart from faith, and on the intelligible supposition of no creation (i. e., no beginning of the world), the metaphysician may not be able so to penetrate the mystery of being that his understanding of *esse* and *causa essendi* renders the major premise self-evident.
- c. The major premise cannot be demonstrated deductively by the direct method, for that would require antecedent terms more intelligible than *being* itself; moreover, since it is for-

mally a hypothetical proposition, and irreducible to a categorical predication, it cannot be demonstrated by an ordinary syllogism through a middle term, which is the predicate of the minor term and the subject of the major term; furthermore, since it is not a proposition *asserting the existence* of anything, but rather the statement of an intelligible connection, it cannot be proved by *a posteriori* reasoning. Hence, the only mode of reasoning available is the *reductio ad absurdum*—a showing that the denial of the proposition leads to self-contradiction. (When the *only* method of arguing for a proposition is indirect, that proposition should be self-evident.)

- (1) Let us suppose to be true what must be shown to be false, namely, that a contingent being can *efficiently* cause the existence of another contingent being. Then the existence of a given contingent being can be explained by reference to another contingent being as its *causa essendi*. But a cause of being must co-exist with its effect. The generator can perish without causing the generated to perish; the moving ball can come to rest while the ball it moved remains in motion; but "the being of a thing cannot continue after that action of the agent has ceased, which is the cause of the effect, not only in *becoming*, but also in *being*" (*Sum. Th.*, I, q. 104, a. 1). Hence, if any contingent thing exists, all its causes *in esse*, proximate and remote, must co-exist, for if B is the cause of A's being, and C is the cause of B's being, and so on to N, all must co-exist with A, or A ceases to be. Now this set of causes cannot be infinite, for an actual infinity of co-existent things is impossible. But if it is finite (letting "N" represent the last term in the ordered set), then either N's being is caused by A, in a circle of efficient causality, which would *seem* to be impossible, or N's being is uncaused, which is impossible by the definition of N as a contingent being. Hence we may be able to conclude that if only contingent beings exist, the existence of *all* of them cannot be explained causally. For at least one of them, the existence of a necessary being (as its *causa essendi*) seems to be required.
- (2) This reasoning is defective for the following reasons. It does not show that one contingent being cannot cause the existence of another. It fails, therefore, to operate as does the indirect argument against those who

deny the self-evidence of the principle of contradiction, for by that method Aristotle, in *Metaphysics*, IV, does not prove the principle, but rather defends its *self-evidence*. Our indirect reasoning here fails to defend the self-evidence of the major premise. Nevertheless, it seems to prove what that major premise asserts, namely, that if any contingent thing exists, a necessary being exists. It shows that in a finite set of co-existent things, there must be at least one whose existence is uncaused. It does not show, however, that there cannot be more than one, or that a necessary being causes the existence of a given contingent thing immediately rather than mediately. Furthermore, the reasoning depends on one proposition which holds in the order of *becoming*, but may not hold in the order of *being*, namely, that if A depends upon N for its existence, N cannot depend on A for its existence. Since the causation of being is without time or the motion of matter, the usual arguments against the possibility of A moving N and N moving A at the same time and in the same way, may not apply. I tentatively suggest that, in order to see the impossibility of this circle, in order to see this reciprocal causality as vicious, it may be necessary to understand *esse* and *causa essendi* well enough so that we can see the impossibility of existence being caused by a contingent being. But if we could do that, the major premise would be self-evident, and there would be no need for this mode of indirect reasoning.

- d. *Supposing* for the moment that the major premise is either self-evident or demonstrable, it still remains to show that there can be *only one* necessary being, for upon the absolute uniqueness of the *causa essendi* proved to exist, depends our right to say that we have thereby proved God's existence. Nothing is more binding upon us than the requirement that we use the word "God" as the proper name of a unique being. But can we infer the uniqueness of an entity from the necessity (or uncaused status) of its existence? I think the answer is Yes on one condition, namely, that we can truly assert that if there is no composition of essence and existence in a thing, there can be no other composition in it—no composition of potency and act, of matter and form, of subject and accident; for then a necessary being would not only be absolutely simple and immutable, but also infinite in being (since all limitation of being derives from the

composition of really distinct principles of being), and there cannot be more than one infinite being. This, I think, can be argued. But is the prerequisite condition of this chain of reasoning capable of being satisfied?

- (1) Is it self-evident or demonstrable that the several compositions are so ordered that whatever lacks the first in order (essence and existence) lacks all the others, and that whatever has the last in order (subject and accident) has all the others? Upon the latter fact would depend our inference that whatever changes accidentally is generable and corruptible, and that whatever is generable and corruptible is contingent in being. Upon the former fact, would depend our inference that a necessary being is purely actual, absolutely simple, hence infinite, hence unique.
- (2) If we do not *somehow* know that the identity of essence and existence excludes all other compositions, a necessary being may exist with potentialities for accidental change. Aristotle and St. Thomas saw no contradiction in the existence of incorruptible bodies with potentiality for accidental change. I say: either an incorruptible moving body is self-contradictory, or a changing necessary being is not. The contingent existence of spiritual substances which are not corruptible, but which are capable of change and are also composite of subject and accident, complicates the problem greatly.
- (3) In short, the proof of God's existence depends in two ways upon *knowledge* concerning the order of the several compositions of really distinct principles of being: (a) we need such knowledge to prove from the facts of motion that a plurality of corruptible substances exist and, from their corruptibility, that they are contingent in existence; (b) we need such knowledge to prove that there can be only one necessary being.
- (4) I dare not say that such knowledge is lacking. I can only say that I am unacquainted with any texts in which this requisite knowledge is exhibited in a series of propositions shown to be self-evident or demonstrated. If there are no such texts, then there is work for metaphysicians to do on this problem, as there is also work for them on the problem of the self-evidence or demonstrability of the major premise which seems to be required for the proof of God's existence.



## IV

In conclusion, I must add, as plainly as possible, what I now know from all this reasoning—that *no corporeal thing can cause the being of another corporeal thing*. I know this because I know that, among bodily things, every expression of efficiency and every communication of energy directly or reductively involves local motion and time; whereas the causation of being is an act totally apart from time and motion. Hence no corporeal substance can *efficiently* cause the being of anything. From this, and from the existence of corporeal substances, whose corruptibility implies their contingency, and whose contingency in being requires a *causa essendi* at every moment of their endurance, I know that there exists a cause of the existence of the whole material world, and also that this *causa essendi* must be a spiritual, i. e., an incorporeal, being. But though an incorporeal being cannot be corruptible by the decomposition of matter and form, it can be contingent in being by the composition of essence and existence. If that is so, it too will need a cause of its existence outside of itself, even though it has always existed. Furthermore, I know that if more than one incorporeal, contingent being exists, the number which do must be finite, for an actually infinite multitude is impossible.

This brings me to the heart of the problem which remains for me. It would *seem possible* for incorporeal beings, albeit contingent, to cause the existence of corporeal things, since spiritual action can take place without time or local motion. It would also *seem possible* for one incorporeal contingent being to cause the being of another. How can I learn that this is impossible, so that I may know by reason that a necessary being exists—the cause of the being of every contingent thing, corporeal and spiritual? The answer would seem to lie in the impossibility of a circle of causation in which, among a *finite* number of contingent beings, each causes the being of another. If such circularity in causation is impossible, then a necessary being is required, for every contingent being must be caused to be.<sup>20</sup> May I repeat once more that to see this last

<sup>20</sup> We are obligated to remember that, in the sphere of becoming, intellect and will

impossibility is tantamount to seeing that a contingent being cannot cause being, which makes self-evident the proposition that if anything contingent exists, a necessary being does. With the self-evidence of this proposition as a major premise, the conclusion "God exists" can be demonstrated with certitude.

One word more. Anyone who raises questions of the sort I have propounded, in the face of a long and venerable tradition in which it is presumed that these matters are settled, should acknowledge that his perplexities may be due to his own incompetence, and should beg indulgence for all the errors he has made, on the ground that he is earnestly seeking the truth. Because man is a social animal, the truth cannot be sought in private. The intellectual life is a social one. Each of us needs all the help he can get from his fellows in speculative work—that most difficult of all cooperative pursuits. Therefore, he should be encouraged to say publicly, after protracted reflection and mature judgment, what he knows and what he does not know, what he sees and what remains hidden, so that others can correct him where he has erred, and direct him where he is blind. If my discourse about God's existence rests upon my erroneous dismissal of traditionally accepted arguments, or upon my ignorance of solutions already available to remove the difficulties I have mentioned, then I hope it will be taken as a plea for instruction. I have reason to think that I am not alone in my difficulties. If they are due to errors and ignorance, then the scholastic metaphysician who is in possession of the knowledge has an obligation to expound it in a more effective manner—contrived with greater sympathy for those gentiles in the modern world who desire natural wisdom.

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seem to be engaged in perfectly reciprocal causality, for each moves the other in the production of a free choice. Furthermore, we must note that it may not follow from the fact that a thing cannot cause its own being, that it cannot cause the being of another, for, as we know, a generated thing generates others, even if it is not able to generate itself.

## CONTEMPLATION IN AMERICA

By JOHN S. MIDDLETON

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JACQUES MARITAIN gives America and Americans hope in their night of obscurity and bewilderment.

We all recall and perhaps admit the insight of the Scottish physician quoted by William James: "You Americans wear too much expression on your faces. You are living like an army with all its reserves engaged in action."<sup>1</sup> The dissipation of a life dominated by all-out action can never be the foundation for a stable program of reconstruction after the irrational and inhuman processes of history now in swift progress before the nervous eyes of a frightened world.

The optimistic reflections of Jacques Maritain on another aspect of American life enliven the drooping spirit of man and alleviate his heaviness of soul at this time. He writes:

. . . There are in America great reserves and possibilities for contemplation. The activism which is manifested here assumes in many cases the aspect of a remedy against despair. I think that this activism itself masks a certain hidden aspiration to contemplation. To my mind, if in American civilization certain elements are causing complaints or criticisms, those elements proceed definitely from a repression of the desire, natural in mankind, for the active repose of the soul breathing what is eternal. In many unhappy creatures, good but wrongly directed, nervous breakdown is the price of such repression. On the other hand, the tendency, natural in this country, to undertake great things, to have confidence, to be moved by large idealistic feelings, may be considered, without great risk of error, as disguising that desire and aspiration of which I spoke.

To wish paradise on earth is stark naiveté. But it is surely better than not to wish any paradise at all. To aspire to paradise is man's grandeur; and how should I aspire to paradise except by beginning to realize paradise here below? The question is to know what paradise is. Paradise consists, as St. Augustine says, in the joy of the Truth. Contemplation is paradise on earth, a crucified paradise.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Talks to Teachers*, Henry Holt & Co., New York, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Scholasticism and Politics*. New York, pp. 192-193. By permission of The Macmillan Co., New York, publishers.

In his speech to the youth of the United Nations, the President of the United States made strong promises for the post-war world:

You are doing first things first—fighting to win this war. For you know that should this war be lost, all our plans for the peace to follow would be meaningless.

Victory is essential; but victory is not enough for you—or for us. We must be sure that when you have won victory, you will not have to tell your children that you fought in vain—that you were betrayed. We must be sure that in your homes there will not be want, *that in your schools the living truth will be taught*, that in your churches there may be preached without fear a faith in which men may deeply believe.

The better world for which you fight—and for which some of you give your lives . . . will be made possible only by *bold vision, intelligent planning, and hard work* . . .<sup>3</sup>

Living Truth! Bold Vision! Intelligent Planning! If Maritain is right when he speaks of America's reserves of contemplation, then these words of the President can make us confident. If Maritain is wrong, the President's gospel of promises is unreal. For contemplation is the "bold vision" necessary for "intelligent planning" and the finding of "living truth."

We should be able to turn to the educators of the country for the verification of Maritain's optimism and the realization of the President's promises. We must confess, however, utter disappointment when we choose to look in this direction. Can we find in the world-and-life outlook of our American scientists, philosophers, and theologians a bold intuition of living truth, and a capacity for intelligent planning? Have their reserves of contemplative power encouraged men of action, men of affairs, to turn to them for that vitally necessary guidance required by the complexities of contemporary life?

The public was forced to read in the headlines of the press: "Scholars confess they are confused." "Scientists and philosophers to bring 'men of affairs' to next Columbia Conference."<sup>4</sup> The formal statement of the third annual Confer-

<sup>3</sup> September 3, 1942.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Times*, September 1, 1942.



ence on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life is in substance a humble confession of failure and inadequacy. It is not very heartening to be told that scholars must be persuaded of their social responsibility. The report reads:

The need is especially urgent to bring home to the world of scholarship and letters its share of the responsibility for the state of contemporary life. The scholar, the artist, or the man of letters cannot be permitted to think of himself as living in a vacuum, engaging in creative thought solely as a means of self expression and a source of personal enjoyment. . . . The man of letters, the creative artist, and the philosopher not only hold the mirror up to nature; they themselves are, to a degree, a mirror of the thought of their age. Their work must therefore be assayed not simply in terms of individual contributions, but as an expression of the social mind and the social conscience, and must be used to diagnose the state of the public mind and to prognosticate, if possible, what that portends.<sup>5</sup>

The statement uses such terms as "spiritual recovery," "life," "freedom," "truth," "responsibility," "moral and spiritual values basic to human life," etc. And yet, the Conference would not accept the challenge of those who might look to them for spiritual and intellectual leadership, to define these basic notions. All admit with the scholars that

the Axis is waging its war, in part, through the spread of false doctrines; its opponents must counter by defending themselves with resort to the truth. . . . The fact that the confusions in the intellectual world are much more subtle and difficult to grasp, and that in the nature of things they are harder to overcome, makes our problem only the more urgent. The price which civilized man pays for freedom is the need for intense effort to organize his life. And similarly, the price required for seeking the truth rather than being satisfied with half truths or falsehoods is the need for greater concentration and more untiring devotion to our task.<sup>6</sup>

All this is very good, but it merely is a public admission of a radically disordered intellectual state. Those who encounter the hard realities of living can only look with justifiable contempt on the soft scepticism of the academic world in America.

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. cit.*

"Men of affairs" will be invited to join the scholars. The sense of objectivity found in the practically ordered ways of men of affairs may be of some help to the scholars. But it is difficult to see how the confusion of the learned world will make life more intelligible and more livable for the men who deal with the concrete realities of twentieth-century existence. It seems to be another perversion of contemporary thought and life that the agonizing insufficiency of the learned world should plead for help from men whose life is principally in the practical order. At least it seems evident that not much can be expected in the way of guidance for reconstruction from the combined viewpoint of the scholars who assembled for the past three years at the Conference under discussion.

The confusion confessed by the scholars assembled at Columbia is but another aspect of the radically unstable philosophy of education that has tried to motivate our American schools on all levels. The anti-metaphysical mentality that regards Saint Thomas Aquinas as an Idealist, while pledging itself to the inadequate realistic conclusions of experimental science, can only result in an utter lack of principles and in an inhuman and depersonalized way of life. A typical example of our intellectual sterility can be found in the following mental mixture of one of the protagonists of experimentalism and instrumentalism in America. Referring to what he calls "the commonplace, more or less idealistic viewpoint in America," he writes:

It is exhibited in skyscrapers that omit the thirteenth floor; in the thousands who rush to a grave in Malden to find a magic cure for their diseases; in the sects that oppose the distribution of birth-control literature because they believe all use of contraceptives to be contrary to Divine commands; in fundamentalists whose belief in an infallible book prompts them to pass laws prohibiting the teaching of scientific theories about the origin of man; in modernists who attempted to dispose of complex social problems by telling us what an earlier religious leader would do were he now here; in all of those who cling to rigid moral codes, regardless of consequences; in the 'Red' hysteria; in censorship laws of all kinds; in the tenacious manner in which humanist leaders cling to the belief in a

golden age in the past and would have us return to it in order to find there the norms and values for present experience; in those who would follow immediate impulse and passing desire rather than be guided by consequences critically evaluated; in short, this mentality is found in all of those who for one reason or another, in one realm or another, do not believe in the use of the experimental method—‘the method of observation, of experiment, of framing and following working hypotheses.’<sup>7</sup>

Such conclusions obviously show the influence of William James through John Dewey, “America’s foremost philosopher.” To put it briefly: “it is both useless and unnecessary to appeal for support to something above and beyond experience.”<sup>8</sup> As Childs further expresses this outlook:

Obviously it involves a shift in the basis of authority. On this basis, institutions and customs, religious creeds, moral codes, the specialized findings of the particular sciences, and the pronouncements of both prophets and experts are all to be tested by the consequences to which they lead in ordinary experience. They are to be judged in terms of their ‘instrumental’ value. . . . Since experience is an ongoing process, this view also means that finality and absolute certainty are impossible. Absolute dogmas must give place to hypotheses. These hypotheses must be modified as experience alters. This puts the issue squarely before education. Can education so equip men and women that they can achieve a satisfying experience on this experimental basis.<sup>9</sup>

Or, as another author puts it:

Scientific Method has proved itself the only reliable means of discovering the realities of existence; it is the new *authentic* revelation, inexhaustible in its possibilities but extremely upsetting in its immediacy. Faith in God and in authority, ideas of soul and immortality, belief in Divine Grace, stable institutions, and automatic progress have been made impossible for the educated mind of to-day.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Childs, *Education and the Philosophy of Experimentalism*, D. Appleton Century Co., New York., pp. 38-39.

<sup>8</sup> Childs, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Woefel, *Molders of the American Mind*. By permission of Columbia University Press, p. 119.

Can the following conclusions of Bertrand Russell be considered unfamiliar to anyone acquainted with the theory behind American education?

That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought or feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system; and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.<sup>11</sup>

Acquaintance with the sixty wonderful years of Jacques Maritain reveals him to be a man full of respect for the methods and conclusions of natural science. His painful awareness that experiment could never reach the deeper realities of being and life occasioned his discovery and possession of the Realism of Saint Thomas Aquinas. If the birthday anniversary of Jacques Maritain should inspire the teachers of America carefully to study the mental development of our Philosopher and so really to understand the genius of the Realism of Saint Thomas Aquinas, a real contribution would result for the post-war reconstruction of American thought and life. In particular, teachers might look to the Angelic Doctor for a true appreciation of their responsibility and their dignity as masters in a weary world. It can do no harm to anyone to reconsider the place of contemplation in the teaching-office according to the mind of Saint Thomas.

Saint Thomas asks himself the question: <sup>12</sup> are contemplative Orders superior to active Orders? As he proceeds to answer this question he gives us his doctrine on the dignity of the master's

<sup>11</sup> *Mysticism and Logic*. W. W. Norton & Co., New York, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 188, a. 6.



vocation, the call to teach. Writing on the works of the active life he states:

There is one which springs from the fulness of contemplation: *teaching*. . . . And this is preferable to simple contemplation. For just as it is a greater thing to shed light than to be full of light, so it is a greater thing to spread abroad the fruits of our contemplation than merely to contemplate.

Teaching therefore is a perfect life because it is the immediate overflow of man's highest power—contemplation.

What is the subject matter of the contemplative life?

The subject matter of the contemplative life is the knowable reasons for things upon which the contemplative dwells. . . . The end of the contemplative life is the consideration of truth. . . . I mean the consideration of uncreated truth. . . . In the function of teaching we find a twofold act. One of its materials is the matter which is taught; the other is he to whom the knowledge is given. By reason of the first subject matter, teaching pertains to the contemplative life; by reason of the second to the active life.<sup>13</sup>

Saint Thomas is clear in insisting that: "in regard to those acts which take their subject matter from the contemplative life, it is necessary that the active follow the contemplative,"<sup>14</sup> and that "the contemplative life is the principle of teaching."<sup>15</sup>

Since contemplation is the principle of teaching and contemplation examines the knowable reasons of things, we should expect to find educators with intellectual virtue of the deepest penetration. In a word, the true educator should share in the philosopher's virtue—*wisdom*. Saint Thomas regards wisdom as the highest of the intellectual virtues. It perfects the intellect in its grasp of last causes. Demonstrating conclusions from premises, wisdom uses a scientific method; arriving at ultimate causes by the natural light of the human intellect it perfects the scientific function of the mind.

Wisdom, therefore, is the virtue of the metaphysician who finds the real beyond observed and observable objects known by the methods of experimental science. It is true that the wise

<sup>13</sup> *De Magistro*, a. 4., Corp.

<sup>14</sup> *Loc. cit.* ad 2m.

<sup>15</sup> *Loc. cit.* ad 4m.

man begins with the experimentalist in sensible singular objects but does not rest until he has gone as far as the human intellect will enable him to go naturally in his investigation of the real. The failure of the experimentalist to recognize the reality of the metaphysical order of being is a root cause of our failure to understand man as man. The oversimplification of the experimentalist has caused recent psychological research to treat man as a thing or a brute, only to be aroused by the horrors of a world at war, which acts as if the teaching of positivists were true. The false concepts of human freedom that have arisen from an anti-metaphysical approach to human personality and human law end in the spread of murderous and suicidal totalitarian tyrannies.

Thus Saint Thomas teaches:

Wisdom . . . considers the highest causes as stated in *I Metaph.* Wherefore, it rightly judges all things and sets them in order, because there can be no perfect and universal judgment that is not based on the first causes.<sup>16</sup>

Wisdom, then, as the highest of man's intellectual powers, is a habit perfecting our mind in the knowledge of the highest—namely divine things.<sup>17</sup>

The wise man knows that things have been made and ordered by God, and that as a consequence, things are hierarchized by their relations to their Ultimate End who is God.<sup>18</sup>

The unequivocal anti-metaphysical mentality of American educators does not seem to point toward an early actualization of Maritain's optimistic hopes on America's potentialities for contemplation. We grow even less optimistic when it becomes clear that some of those educators who acknowledge the reality of the metaphysical order and exalt wisdom act as if they did not. Teachers are so few because the intellectual virtue of wisdom is so rare. Sometimes, under the pretext of caring for the morals of students, the training in the intellectual virtues is

<sup>16</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 57, a. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *IV Contra Gent.* 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 14, a. 1, ad 2m; also, I-II, q. 57, a. 3; I, q. 1, a. 6.

neglected. Learning is degraded to the memorization of opinions. In truth, there frequently is no teaching because there is no learning in the true sense. Instructors do not teach because they do not contemplate, and contemplation is the immediate prerequisite of the magisterial office. Then too the exaltation and promotion in the field of education of so-called practical men—shrewd administrators, fact-finding statisticians, ingratiating financiers, superficial efficiency experts, and the like—have turned education into a big business and our schools into factories for mass production.

The result is nervous agitation among professors and students as the wild chase for courses, credits and degrees becomes more and more accelerated. The calm contemplative mood is destroyed. The habit of wisdom is seldom acquired. Men become unfit for well ordered human action in the practical ways of life. This is the tragedy of our times.

The horrors of inhuman war may shock us into the rediscovery of man, as man. Educators more generally may begin to court wisdom. Order is born of wisdom and the tranquility of order is peace. Jacques Maritain may be right. Otherwise, the "living truth," "bold vision," and "intelligent planning" of which the President speaks to the youth of the world will prove to be vague verbalisms. Well may we all reflect on the challenging conclusions of one who describes Jacques Maritain as "one of the deepest thinkers of all times":

Losing science will not give us philosophy. But if we lose philosophy itself, we must be prepared to lose science, reason and liberty; in short we are bound to lose Western culture itself together with its feeling for the eminent dignity of man.<sup>19</sup>

Referring to the decline of modern philosophy, Gilson continues:

Personally I even hope that it will soon cease to be at all. For what is now called philosophy is either collective mental slavery or scepticism. There still are men who hate both and who will not lament the passing of that alternative. . . . Against the crude, yet

<sup>19</sup> Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, p. 293.

fundamentally sound craving of Marxism for positive and dogmatic truth—the scepticism of our decadent philosophy has not a chance. It deserves to be destroyed as it actually is in the minds of many among our contemporaries who embrace Marxism because it is the only dogmatism they know. Not something less rational or less constructive but something more rational and more comprehensively constructive is required to meet its challenge. The time of the ‘As if’ is over; what we now need is a ‘This is so,’ and we shall not find it, unless we first recover both our lost confidence in the rational validity of metaphysics and our long-forgotten knowledge of its object. Therefore, let the dead bury their dead, and let us turn ourselves towards the future, for it will be what we shall make it: either an aimlessly drifting wreck, or a ship holding a steady course with a rational animal at the wheel.<sup>20</sup>

One thing is certain: the wisdom of Jacques Maritain must eventually prevail, but it requires the purification of a sacrificial dark night. Has not he himself told us that “contemplation is paradise on earth—a crucified paradise.” Or, as better expressed in the reflection of his profoundly contemplative wife: “When nameless sufferings have purified us, then only can the breath of life, which is able to renew the face of the earth, blow once again upon our misfortunes and our patience.”<sup>21</sup>

Surely this issue of *THE THOMIST*, dedicated to a layman and to which so many learned laymen contribute, is a hopeful sign. The host of admirers of Jacques Maritain in America are grateful to have among us one who loves and lives Wisdom; one who loves contemplation and contemplates to love; a good educator because a real philosopher; and a real philosopher because a philosopher of the real; a man who lives the truth he expounds, as he exemplifies the ennobling humanism he defends. We recognize him in his own words: “There is mud and blood in the world, yet while our hands dabble therein our hearts must be pure, and, if they are, they also purify.”<sup>22</sup>

*St. Joseph's Seminary,  
Dunwoodie, Yonkers, N. Y.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295.

<sup>21</sup> Raissa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, p. 208.

<sup>22</sup> Preface by Jacques Maritain to “The Layman’s Call,” by the Reverend William R. O’Connor. P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York.



## PROVIDENCE

By W. R. THOMPSON, F. R. S.



BY Creation we mean, in the last analysis, the total dependence of the universe on God. Providence is, broadly speaking, merely an aspect or consequence of this dependence. But, taken in an exact sense, it refers to the *government* of the universe. Providence is the arrangement of things with a view to the attainment of future ends. The provident man is one who puts aside a portion of his income, so that he may be able to live through a time when that income fails, making an arrangement that safeguards in advance the well-being of himself and his family and insures its maintenance.

The necessity of providential action in the universe is much more obvious now than it was a few decades ago. Owing to the influence of evolutionary theory, scientific men were at one time inclined to think that most of the other planets of our solar system were inhabited by intelligent beings, or at least by living organisms of some kind. But now that the delicate and intricate characters of the environmental relations necessary to sustain life have been more fully realized, this view has been very largely abandoned. The predominant opinion now seems to be that the earth probably is the only spot in the universe which is able to support life. The idea that intelligent beings exist elsewhere is considered very improbable. In a remarkable address given to the Zoological Section of the British Association some years ago, Dr. Julian Huxley went so far as to claim that evolutionary progress "could, apparently, have pursued no other course than that which it has historically followed"; that "conceptual thought could only arise in a monocotous mammal of terrestrial habit, but arboreal for most of its mammalian ancestry"; and that "it could not have evolved on earth except in man." He also asserted that if man were wiped out "it is in the highest degree improbable that the step leading to conceptual thought would again be taken, even by his nearest relatives."

The American biochemist, Professor Lawrence J. Henderson, after a careful and detailed study of the physico-chemical properties of the inorganic elements and compounds occurring in the universe, concluded <sup>1</sup> that the connection between certain properties of the elements, "almost infinitely improbable as the result of contingency, can only be regarded, is in truth only fully intelligible even if mechanically explained, as a preparation for the evolutionary process." We are "obliged to regard this collocation of properties," he says, "as in some intelligible sense a preparation for the process of planetary evolution."

Nevertheless, Professor Henderson, though recognizing that this brings us "face to face with the problem of design," thought that we must retreat from this problem and seek for safety in employing "the vaguest possible term which can be imagined, from which all implication of design and purpose has been completely eliminated." Dr. Julian Huxley is of the same opinion. "Any purpose we find manifested in evolution is only an apparent purpose. It is we who have read purpose into evolution, as earlier men projected will and emotion into inorganic phenomena like storm and earthquake."

The authors we have just quoted are to be complimented on the way in which they have faced and stated the facts—though Dr. Huxley has perhaps gone further than is necessary and justifiable. A good many of their predecessors, like Professor Ernst Haeckel in Germany and Professor Étienne Rabaud in France, have attempted to get around the facts by depreciating or denying the reality of adaptive arrangements, even in the world of life. Dr. Huxley will have none of this. "It has been for some years," he says, "the fashion to decry the study or even to deny the fact of adaptation"; he believes that this is "a passing fashion, and that, both structurally and functionally, every organism is a bundle of adaptations, more or less efficient, coordinated in greater or lesser degree."

Nevertheless, the honesty and common sense of these two scientists has led them into a position that is philosophically untenable.

<sup>1</sup> *The Order of Nature*. Harvard Univ. Press, 1925.

Let us suppose that a paleontologist, digging in deposits earlier than those in which any human relics have been discovered, finds a stone axe. We may say, without fear of contradiction, that he will instantly recognize it as such and refer to it by this name. In so doing, he asserts, implicitly at least, that the object discovered is a tool or instrument formed in a manner that enables its user to execute certain definite purposes. A stone axe is a feebly characterized implement; this one may differ somewhat from those previously discovered. In the deposit examined, no such thing has hitherto been found. Nevertheless the paleontologist unhesitatingly classes it as a product of human design and the embodiment of a human purpose. How prone he is to do this may be realized when we recall the long controversy in regard to the flint objects called "eoliths." These are pieces of flint found in strata of great antiquity, and are so shapeless that it has been possible to duplicate them from among flints removed from certain rotary machines used in cement factories — flints due, therefore, to forces acting at random. No definitely human remains were found associated with them and their acceptance as human products would have thrown back human origins to a time far earlier than that to which the most primitive fossils were ascribed. Yet the status of the eoliths as man-made implements was most energetically defended by competent scientists, and still is.

The principal points at issue in this controversy are two. The first is, whether the form of the eoliths is, in fact, that of a definable tool, or, in other words, has a demonstrable relation to a definite end. The second is, whether this form can have been produced by inorganic factors acting at random and likely to have operated in this case. If the eolith can be properly described as an implement, that is, as an artificial object designed in respect to an end, then a designer is required. If the circumambient natural forces are demonstrably inadequate to the effect produced, then an extraneous agent must be postulated. These two arguments are taken as complementary, and though the first really implies the second, it is considered as demonstrative in itself. Thus, the fact that the cement-machines

produced flints resembling well-characterized implements of the Magdalenian, or even Neolithic, type is considered by those who maintain the human origin of eoliths to prove *too much*, since implements of this character are generally accepted as human products.<sup>2</sup> This is rather curious reasoning and shows very clearly the tremendous compelling force of the argument that leads from the appearance of design to a designer; for if natural forces are adequate to production of the more perfect tool, the possibility that they were in fact responsible for the less perfect tool certainly does not seem to be *diminished*.

It is thus clear that whatever opinion they may hold as to the validity of theological arguments, scientific men do, in fact, constantly and forcefully argue from the appearance of design to the existence of an actual designer, and this though the designer may be what Professor H. Dingle<sup>3</sup> would call an "unobservable." To this the usual reply is that, though we have never seen and may never see even the fossil remains of the tool-maker responsible for the eoliths, we have actually seen makers of somewhat similar though more finished tools, such as the North American Indians; so that our argument does not take us out of the field of experience. But Dr. M. C. Burkitt<sup>4</sup> in an article on eoliths put the matter rather differently. He merely ascribed them to "a tool-making animal" which he is content to say was "probably man." This remark reveals the hidden logical structure of the argument. It does not, as might be supposed, lead directly to some specific creature, but leads simply to the general idea or concept of a "designer," the content of this concept being simply that which is primarily and *per se* required for the essence of the effect. This effect is not the material object. It is rather the formal relation discernible in it by the intelligence, an intelligible order by which the multiplicity of the material object is unified with respect to a certain end. In short, what the argument leads to is the concept of an ordering or designing intelligence or reason. Conceptual thought or an analogue of it is the immediate end-point of the argument.

<sup>2</sup> Duckworth. *Prehistoric Man*. Cambridge Univ. Press.

<sup>3</sup> *Through Science to Philosophy*.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition.



It may, however, be objected that, though the argument from ordered arrangement demonstrates the existence, past or present, of an ordering intelligence, yet we have no experience, since of such an intelligence except as manifested in material organisms, and are indeed by nature incapable of such an experience because everything that is in the mind comes to it through the gateway of the senses. Thus, though the argument is valid if its end-point is *human* intelligence, it cannot possibly lead to any real conclusions involving anything transcending the material world.

This objection misses the real point of the argument. The thesis that an arrangement obviously designed in relation to a certain end implies an intelligent designer does not involve or require any additional knowledge of the designer, nor any particular views as to his status and mode of being. The definition of designer to which it leads is simply: *an intelligence*. An examination of the faculty of reason shows that its specific and characteristic activity is the right ordering of things toward an end, as we recognize when we say, for example, that such an arrangement is *reasonable*, which means that it is one by which a certain end can be achieved. When we detect reasonable arrangements in things themselves devoid of reason we are forced to conclude that reason presided over them and brought them into being.

We constantly and rightly say that the ordered arrangements created by man are reasonable and must owe their origin to a reason, and that this reason, which is man, is himself a reasonable being, as he must be, since he could not reason were he not something intrinsically constituted and ordered to this end. To say this and then to say that behind this relative and contingent reason there is no ultimate and necessary reason—that the reasonable arrangement that is man is the product of essential unreason—is to break violently and without rational justification the sequence of the argument and to discard at an arbitrarily chosen point the rational principles hitherto accepted as valid. Man is in some sense a product of nature. The universe that produces a rational being must be a reasonable universe.

"The future of man," says Dr. Julian Huxley, "must be guided by a deliberate purpose." But how can nature produce or contain a creature capable of purposeful deliberation, if natural activities are entirely purposeless either in themselves or as instruments of a transcendent cause? This idea involves contradiction. It is like saying that though the apple tree has produced apples it has not in itself the capacity of producing apples. If all natural non-human activities are purposeful only in appearance, then what we must really conclude is that human purpose is also only apparent, in which case our talk about purposeful deliberation and command of future evolution is based on a delusion, and is as if the stone, as it rolls down the hill under the influence of natural forces, were to speak about *its* plans for reaching the bottom. Purposeful deliberation implies not merely movement toward an end, but a *choice* of the end to which one moves. This implies *freedom to choose*. Freedom to choose means a genuine indeterminism in respect to natural forces and the material world. It can only be postulated on the assumption that human activity in some sense really transcends the material order. But man as an object of zoological definition is merely a certain kind of animal, a material object whose activities, in so far as they are the object of scientific investigation, are material activities. Considered from this angle, it is clear that man really belongs to nature, so that if nature is purposeless, man is also purposeless. Man's body is in some sense an assemblage of inorganic elements, belonging, *ex hypothesi*, to an order essentially non-purposeful. How then can the assemblage be purposeful, if neither the elements nor their arrangement are purposeful?

This last point is worth a little more attention. It is clear that the argument from the order discernible in human constructions to a constructive intention or purpose is generally accepted as perfectly valid and convincing. There are some who refuse to extend the argument to animal constructions, maintaining that, though the jar on our breakfast table is really designed to contain honey, the clay bottle in which the solitary bee places the honey for its larva is a purposeless object, and

that, while a fisherman's net proves design to catch fish, the practical usefulness of the spider's net for catching flies is the result of pure chance. This view will not bear examination. That there is in the animal world an activity analogous to reason, and that animals really perform series of purposeful actions, is not generally denied. But the case of purely natural products, such as the living organisms themselves, is rather different. That the wireless set I have built is the result of a purpose is a fact of which I have a direct and absolutely certain knowledge. The bird's nest is something the bird can be seen to build, and though here we merely infer purpose our inference rests on a quite solid foundation. But we cannot *see* in nature, any *being* responsible for the bird, or for ourselves, since the process of generation is not a creative assembling, but merely a kind of division.

This difficulty is merely superficial, arising out of a misunderstanding of the texture of the argument. We recognize instantly that a chair is made to sit in. But suppose we merely have a heap of the parts of the chair, prepared for assembling. This may not at first sight convey anything to us, but as soon as we begin to try to fit the parts together we perceive that they form a chair and we are then quite certain that they were cut out and shaped for that purpose. Each part is in a sense independent and can be considered in itself. Nevertheless, the properties of the parts really have a relation to a higher order to which the parts are predetermined and in which their *raison d'être*, as parts, is to be found.

So it is with natural combinations. As Dr. Julian Huxley truly and profoundly put it, evolutionary progress is measured by its upper levels. Since the upper level is something perfectly specific and definite, the number of ways in which it can be attained is not limitless. Human beings can survive only within certain environmental limits. They cannot survive even within these limits unless the bodily mechanisms are of a certain definite type. These mechanisms could not be what they are were it not for the properties of the organic compounds built up by the organisms. These, in turn, would not form were not

the inorganic elements predetermined to their formation. We cannot live without oxygen; we cannot take in oxygen without our red blood corpuscles; the ability of the corpuscles to take up oxygen depends on the presence of hemoglobin; the properties of hemoglobin depend strictly on the properties of iron; iron exists because the elements of the subatomic world are predetermined to its formation. This argument could be developed through innumerable channels. The upper levels of nature exist only because the lower levels are predetermined to their production. The upper levels, such as the human organism, require for their emergence and maintenance an infinite multitude of delicate adjustments and coordinations, which are possible only because the elements of the universe are predetermined to that end. Predetermination is another name for finality. We can thus say that the final cause or object to which the universe is predetermined is man, or as Dr. Huxley puts it, conceptual thought; and that this predetermination is fundamental, or *ab origine*.

But, though this much is granted, it may still be said that the production of the world as we see it was not purposeful but was due simply to pure necessity, so that it could not have been otherwise. In that case, to enquire why things have proceeded as they have is a futile question.

This answer is, however, inadmissible. Though the basic elements of the universe are predetermined to combine and thus generate new substances and though this will in a sense account for systems of the most complex character, such combinations can occur only in certain environmental settings which, as scientific investigation has shown, are very precisely coordinated. If this coordination is not maintained, the combinations produced will not persist,<sup>5</sup> because the substances that exist in the universe are mutually destructive, except in certain constellations and concatenations. That the correct set of circumstances should not only occur momentarily but actually be maintained throughout the period during which life has existed on the earth, by chance alone, is not merely

<sup>5</sup> Aquinas, *I Contra Gent.*, 13.



improbable but impossible. If this could occur, we should expect to find houses, automobiles, and wireless sets assembled here and there by the random forces of the universe, as we find ostriches and oak trees assembled by nature. We must insist on this point, for it is fundamental. Either nature tends to the production of certain coordinated assemblages and not to others, and in that case their production is intentional, or it does not tend to the production of any of them, which means that they owe their existence *wholly* to chance. It must be carefully noted that the latter hypothesis means the *complete* elimination of predetermination. But chance means the intersection of two independent causal series, as when I meet a friend by accident while he is going to the post office and I am going to lunch. It is a by-product of finality, on which it is grafted. The concept of a world absolutely without predetermination is thus self-contradictory and unthinkable. A certain minimum of predetermination must be introduced to get a world that is thinkable. However, since it is necessary, for the sake of the argument, to let the opponent have his cake and eat it, let us suppose that the predetermination of things is very small: for example, that there are only imaginary space and geometrical points, endowed with random movements. In that case we shall expect that the most likely configurations outlined by adjacent points will be the most simple: for example, of an octahedron or some other complex figure, in which the mathematical coordination is a minimum, that the points will be situated at the corners of triangles of various shapes and sizes, rather than the corners of equilateral triangles. If nature is like this, then wheelbarrows or stone axes are far more probable productions than orchids or elephants, and ought to be enormously more frequent in nature. Since they are not, it is evident that nature tends to produce orchids and elephants and *not* wheelbarrows and stone axes, in spite of the infinitely greater complexity of the former, and this though forces adequate to the formation of the axe and the wheelbarrow exist in nature, needing only to be assembled to this end.

We must also observe that, though the elements of the uni-

verse, if properly assembled, enter naturally into more or less stable combinations, the prerequisite assemblage, or coordination, is something for which the individual elements, considered separately, are not sufficient causes. The work of coordination is not attributable to anything that science can discern and define in nature. Yet, if the coordination of parts in a simple thing like a wheelbarrow irresistibly demands explanation and reference to an adequate cause, how much more is this required for the infinitely complex and delicate coordination necessary for the appearance and maintenance of living things.

Furthermore, the properties and predeterminations of the elements of the universe themselves demand explanation. Here the invocation of chance is not merely vain, but altogether unthinkable. Everything that exists in the universe results from the combination of an odd hundred chemical "elements,"<sup>6</sup> to which must be added the "isotopes." Some of these have, at present, no assignable role; but other are of fundamental importance. If oxygen and hydrogen disappeared, there would be no water and therefore no life, since life cannot exist without water. The proof that this is so is to be found in the study of waterless conditions. Wherever they are found, life is absent. No other substance arises from the combination of other elements to take the place of water; no organisms that can survive without it come into existence. Water seems to be one of the fundamental requirements of living things.

Now the question is, why should there be a substance like water? It is clear—to go no farther back—that we might contemplate the properties of oxygen and hydrogen during an infinity and never know that when we pass an electric spark through a mixture of these two gases they will combine to form water. Water passes into the solid state at  $0^{\circ}$  C.; at  $100^{\circ}$  it becomes a gas. These things, like everything else water does, like all the properties it exhibits under various conditions, cannot possibly be discerned by the *inspection* of water. Experiment alone reveals them. It is thus impossible to say that they are

<sup>6</sup> It is now clear that the so-called "elements" must be regarded as combinations; but this does not alter the argument and may be neglected.

necessary, as the properties of the triangle are necessary. The properties of water are, of course, constant and definite. But there is no necessary intelligible connection between the nature of water and the properties it exhibits. That this particular combination of oxygen and hydrogen should freeze at  $0^{\circ}$  C. and boil at  $100^{\circ}$  C. is not necessary, but contingent. Similarly, the existence of the odd hundred existing elements with the properties they actually have, enabling the production of the world we see, is contingent. These elements, with the properties they have, are not in themselves *necessary* beings, whose non-existence is inconceivable. An infinite number of other elements could exist without any infringement of the laws of reason, and the universe could be one of an infinite multitude in which no life nor progress is possible. The coordination and progressiveness of the universe is thus fundamentally contingent, and its progress is also contingent. But to be contingent is to be dependent. We are thus forced to the conclusion that the existence, form, and movement of the universe are not necessary in themselves but depend on a transcendent cause which is both Creator and Providence.

To men of science the idea of Providence is often distasteful because they think it implies a capricious interference with the laws of nature. What is providential is opposed to what is natural and believed to include simply that of which nature is incapable. Professor M. Caullery, for example, adopts this attitude in his book, *Le Problème de l'Évolution*, suggesting that the evolutionary explanation of organic adaptations eliminates the belief that they are providential. According to this idea, Providence means inducing things to do what they would not do were they left to themselves, as in the case of a farm horse which pulls the plough up and down the field in obedience to the plowman but would stand on the edge and eat grass if allowed to follow its inclination. It thus implies an incessant tinkering with the universal machinery, and if this is really going on it is difficult to see how any genuine science could be built up, since the possibility of science depends on natural law, made objectively evident by the constancy of the properties and activities of things.

This view of Providence is, of course, mistaken. A more careful examination of the example we have just given will show where the mistake lies.

When we speak of "interfering" in nature, we must be careful to distinguish between interference with *laws* and interference with *things*. Though the laws of nature are, absolutely speaking, contingent, as has been shown, they are, in a relative sense, necessary. It is not absolutely necessary that the combination of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen should have the properties it has. But being what it is, it will, under given conditions, always be or do the same definite thing. No matter what we do, we cannot alter the fact that under certain specified conditions water boils at  $100^{\circ}$  C. But what we can do is to boil *this* pint of water and leave *that* pint unboiled. The natures of things are constant and immutable; but the manifestations of these natures depend on the impacts between the individual things in which they are realized. These impacts are interferences and this kind of interference is normal to nature and included in it. Thus when the cook makes an apple tart and bakes it in the oven she is not *interfering* with the laws of nature, this being indeed impossible; she is simply *utilizing* them. Utilization is achieved by interfering with *things*, with the particular, individual situation prevailing *hic et nunc*; this situation, since it is not a thing but merely a complex of things, has no nature of its own and consequently no radical resistance to alterations. A process in nature, resulting from the interactions of things, may follow, approximately, a certain mathematical law. This law, as formulated mathematically, is internally necessary, and any deductions from it are certain to be true. Thus, if the echinoderm egg assumes a spherical form its quantities stand in the relation expressed by the equations for the volume and surface of the sphere in terms of the radius, and everything else we can say about its quantitative relations can be deduced from these equations. But this does not alter the fact that an individual egg may not be quite spherical, or may not remain so. Mathematical laws *express* the state of the interrelations between things, but physical



laws actually rule the interrelations. The ploughman driving the horse up and down the field is thus not interfering with the laws of the horse's nature. The horse is really doing what is natural to him, things being as they are. But the ploughman is ploughing the land to prepare it for sowing. He is providing what is required for this purpose. Providential action is therefore possible without any interference with the laws of nature and, indeed, proceeds through the medium of these laws. The task of science is the discovery and definition of the laws of nature. Providential action therefore does not constitute, in any sense, an obstacle to this task.

The actual history of the universe depends fundamentally on two things: the specific natures of the things in the universe and the individual contacts occurring between them. Providence, as we have seen, concerns not so much the establishment or specification of the natures of things, but rather the contacts or relations between them, from moment to moment. In other words, it concerns the current of individual events. But this is not matter for science, which deals only with the general and for which the strictly individual is, as Meyerson says,<sup>7</sup> an "irrational." Providential action thus falls outside the field of science.

It may, however, be objected that though the providential action of creatures among themselves involves no interference with natural law, this is not true of Divine Providence, since God is outside the natural order. But as we have already said, God moves every created thing in conformity with its nature. What it does, as moved by Him, under any set of circumstances, is what it *naturally* does. Divine Providence works through the medium of natural law, like the providential action of creatures. The providential action of God thus does not constitute an interference with the natural order of things.

Since Providence concerns the particular constellation in which events are to be found at any given moment in the world's history, and does not imply any alteration of natural laws, we can say that the temporal origin of the providential

<sup>7</sup> *De l'Explication dans les Sciences.*

dispositions we observe is to be found in the particular constellation in which created things appeared in the first moment assignable to the universe, not because the subsequent constellations are less providential, but simply because, in regard to *us*, the initial constellation is, as it were, in a privileged position, being the last point to which our science of created things can lead us. We can thus say, making allowance for the "open futures" of the free agents in the universe, that the providential sequence of events was predetermined in the origin.

This does not mean that it was predictable at the origin, in the sense that it could be foreseen in its causes. The world's history is constituted by a current of contingent events, of which we cannot say that they will be or will not be. This is not only because the universe contains free agents like man, whose choices are undetermined. It depends also on the fact that the precise results of the contacts between material things are unknowable, because the natures of these things are material and therefore opaque to a created intelligence. Only observation and experiment will tell us what material things really do under given circumstances, and even after we have discovered what it is the connection is only a factual, not an intelligible, connection. In the natural world—as contrasted with the experimental world—the settings in which events occur vary from moment to moment and are never twice exactly the same. Between the real and the experimental situations there is therefore a great gulf, which human effort can never span completely. The real history of the world is therefore not matter for science, nor could it have been foretold, even by an angelic intelligence or a super-mathematician seeing in one vision and understanding, in so far as they are understandable by a created intelligence, the whole complex of factors existing at the world's origin, as Laplace and Tyndall wrongly supposed. The idea of Providence therefore does not in any way interfere with the requirements and possibilities of science.

Another objection to the idea of Providence is that, if it really existed, there would be no lapses or failures in nature, in other words, nothing which is in any degree imperfect. But it is

evident that nature is full of imperfection. It seems, therefore, that Providence cannot exist.

The simplest answer to this objection is that God, though He is omnipotent, cannot make another God, because this is intrinsically impossible. God's omnipotence does not extend to the intrinsically impossible; this would be contrary to reason. But God is essentially reason and since what He can do depends on what He is, essentially, He cannot do what is unreasonable. It is evident that the idea that God might create another God is contrary to reason. That which is absolutely independent is on a higher level than that which is in any degree dependent; but to be created is to be dependent. That which is created by God cannot therefore be equal to him. But God is the only absolutely perfect being. Created being must therefore be imperfect.

On the other hand, since created being is limited being, the greater the diversity of creatures in the universe, the greater its perfection will be. A multitude of finite goods is preferable to one finite good. Furthermore, if only one species existed in the created universe, an indefinite number of other possible species would be excluded and the universe would be the poorer for their absence. Again, goodness is self-diffusive; a thing that can increase the goodness of something else is better than a thing isolated and self-contained; and this would not be possible if the created universe did not comprise a diversity of creatures, dependent one on the other.<sup>8</sup> We can see also that a universe containing only *one* individual of each species of material thing would be entitatively less rich than a universe in which many individuals exist, because the species of material things are diversified in matter. This man is stronger than that man, but not so intelligent. In material things the perfection of the specific nature is more fully manifested in a multitude of individuals than it can be in one alone. Humanity is greater than any man. The perfection of the universe is thus best assured by a multiplicity of species and individuals, not forming a chaotic assemblage, but functionally interrelated. The arguments just

<sup>8</sup> *II Contra Gent.*, 45.

advanced in regard to this point are philosophical and may seem rather tenuous. But suppose, to take a concrete example, that the universe was a solid block of one homogeneous and unchanging substance, such as iron. In that case the disagreeable results that follow from multiplicity would no doubt be avoided, but only at the expense of the almost infinite richness and variety contained in the real world. This inert mass would not be a field of conflict and death, like the real world; but it would be infinitely inferior to it, and even the most pessimistic philosopher would not prefer such a world to the one we inhabit.

If it be granted that the multiplication of species and individuals enhances the perfection of the universe, the necessity of local and individual imperfection and failure becomes evident. The fundamental principle involved is well expressed in the proverbs that tell us that we cannot have our cake and eat it and that we cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. Thus the attractive butterflies that decorate the landscape cannot appear unless their caterpillars destroy or injure the plants they require for food. Unless the butterflies have an adequate reproductive power, they cannot maintain their species throughout the variations in the environment. If this reproductive power were not kept down to a low level, the caterpillars of any given species would become so numerous that all their food material would be destroyed, after which the species would perish from starvation. This reduction in the number of the phytophagous insects is partially effected by parasitic and predacious insects and insectivorous birds. The destruction of their prey by these creatures is often cited as an example of the cruelty of nature. But would anyone seriously propose killing off all the beneficial insects and birds in order to allow the phytophagous insects to flourish? This would be a senseless proceeding. The world would be the poorer for it and it would not achieve the result aimed at because the world is so constructed that the increase of any species beyond a certain point automatically brings destruction on it. It is no worse for the caterpillar to be devoured by an internal parasite or swallowed by a tit than it is for it to die of starvation. Furthermore,



though it is better to be and never cease to be than to be and then die, yet no one can reasonably maintain that it is better never to be than to be for a time and then cease. Existence is a positive good and though much of it is better than little, yet some of it is better than none. The existence of imperfections in the universe is thus not incompatible with the idea of Providence. Providence does not arrange and decree the evil in the world; what it decrees is the maximum amount of being that this particular created world can contain. This can only be secured by a multiplicity of beings in space and time. This is only possible on condition that each individual being sacrifices something of what it *is* or *could be*. This is not merely an arbitrarily imposed condition of the universe. It is a *rational necessity*. God is reason.

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## A DATE IN THE HISTORY OF EPISTEMOLOGY

By GERARD SMITH, S. J.

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LET us agree, provisionally, to divide propositions as follows: 1. self-evident axioms, e. g., *parallels in tri-dimensional space never meet*; 2. evident or experienced truths, e. g., *John, George, etc., speak*; 3. conclusions deduced from self-evident axioms, e. g., *the interior and exterior angles of parallels are equal*; 4. conclusions induced from evident truths, e. g., *man speaks*; 5. postulates, that is, propositions which are none of the above four, yet are not contradictory, e. g., *parallels never meet*.

The source of these propositions may be further described. For propositions of class 1, the source is our inability to think of parallels in tri-dimensional space *and* also to think of them as meeting; once we try to do that, we achieve a blank, we cease to understand. Propositions of class 2 arise from our feeling things, touching them, and so on. For classes 3 and 4 the source is our inability to *continue* to think premises if we deny the conclusions therefrom. Propositions of class 5 have their source in intelligibility, as have propositions of class 1; nevertheless the opposites of such propositions are also intelligible under different hypotheses. Non-Euclidean geometries exist. Thus, intelligibility gives propositions 1; experience gives propositions 2; a necessary continuity between thinking an axiom or an experienced truth *and* another truth which is neither axiomatic (it is deduced), nor experienced (it is induced), gives us propositions 3 and 4 respectively.

So far the matter would seem simple enough. But it is not so simple to idealists and to realists of carious realism. These philosophers feel called upon to raise the question why axioms are axioms, why proof proves, why, when they see red, it is red which they see. To them one might remark that if they do succeed in finding such reasons, those reasons must necessarily

fall under one of the five classes of propositions, and thus they would be right back where they started, that is, if there be any explanation of knowledge such as *they* are looking for, that explanation must issue from a knowledge which is itself to be explained in turn. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to engage in a game of choosing up sides by overhand grips of knowledge upon knowledge upon knowledge, etc. *ad infinitum*, with no prospect of ever coming to the end of the bat—and of having our game—we might as well never have started our inquiry; that is, we might as well have admitted from the beginning the validity of knowledge.

Such a remark might seem to arise from pure dialectic. That is not so. Nevertheless, in order to avoid even the appearance of smart talk, we may examine the root of the matter.

One way of baring that root might be as follows. Idealists would dearly love, as who would not, to keep their feet on the ground. They would like to talk of things which are or can be, just as everyone else tries to do. Only, their scruple about doing this seems to come from what is at least a dubious conclusion from a very true principle. The true principle is this: only creative knowledge can give an object of knowledge. The dubious conclusion therefrom is this: therefore, our knowledge is somehow creative of its object. Now, if one urges against that dubious conclusion another one, viz., therefore our knowledge is not creative of, does not give but rather gets, its object, they will ask, "What, then, does give our knowledge its object?" If one answers to this that existents give our knowledge its object, they will counter, "How do you know, since knowledge of existents is not in propositions 1, 3, 4? And if knowledge of existents is not in those propositions, why may not the situation in propositions 2 be exactly the same? Think them we must, but whether or not the propositions are about existents we do not know." At this point, huffing and puffing, a realist might suggest that propositions 1, 3, 4, even though not forthwith expressive of knowledge of existents, nevertheless do express what subjects and predicates must be if they exist. The idealist persists, "How do you know that?" "Because," a

realist must say, "I know there are existents." "And how," is the final inquiry of an idealist, "do you know *that*?"

Thus the issue is drawn. Do we, or do we not, know existents? If we do, propositions 1, 3, 4 express what must be true if anything exists, because propositions 2 express what in fact exists. If we do not, propositions of classes 1, 3, 4 express only what we must *think* to be true, either because we do not know whether class 2 expresses knowledge of existents—this is critical idealism, or because we know that they do not express knowledge of existents—this is dogmatic idealism.

As to the issue itself, it is one whose resolution is anterior to demonstration and self-evidence. It cannot be proved, disproved, named self-evident or a postulate. Either one must admit from evidence that in propositions 2 we know existents and hence may know what must be true, in propositions 1, 3, 4, of existents if they exist; or one questions or denies that evidence, and thus questions or denies the validity of all knowledge based upon existents.

It is to M. Étienne Gilson that we are indebted for enabling us to see the issue thus. His books<sup>1</sup> upon the subject are a date, *ante* Gilson, *post* Gilson, in the history of epistemology. Having reported the issue, I shall now report its resolution.

A false start in the attempt to resolve the issue would ruin everything. Two false starts are possible: one from the viewpoint of knowledge, one from the viewpoint of being. To take, first, the false start from the viewpoint of knowledge: We condemn ourselves to winding up at a dead end if we isolate the kinds of human knowledge, sense and intellectual knowledge, from each other and ask of either kind alone to explain itself or the other as being human knowledge. True, we may isolate and examine, analytically, sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge, just as we may analytically isolate and examine the soul and body of man. However, just as we may not say that *man is soul* or *man is body*, so may we not say that *human knowledge is sense knowledge* or *human knowledge is intellec-*

<sup>1</sup> Étienne Gilson, *Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance*, Vrin, 1939, esp. CC. VII, VIII; *Le Réalisme Méthodique*, Tequi, esp. C. V.



*tual knowledge.* A man is both soul and body taken together. Just so, human knowledge is both sense knowledge and intellectual knowledge taken together, a unit of distinct though inseparable factors. Human intellectual knowledge alone would be knowledge of quiddities—if human knowledge were intellectual only. Human sense knowledge alone would be knowledge of *sensibilia propria* or *communia*—if human knowledge were sensible only. Yet in human knowing neither sense knowledge nor intellectual knowledge exists alone. They exist together, forming a unit knowledge, which is human knowledge, quite as soul and body form a unit which is a man. One must be as rough here on Platonism as on sensism. Human knowledge is neither purely intellectual nor purely sensible; not either, purely. It is both. Rough we must be if we do not wish to cut the ridiculous figure of starting out to talk about something, in this case about human knowledge, and winding up by talking about something else, in this instance about purely intellectual knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Sensism would not even enable us to start talking.

Resigning ourselves to being less than angels, more than animals, and not at all polyps, let us agree that “properly speaking neither sense nor intellect knows, but man knows by both together.”<sup>3</sup> If we agree to that, we need not concern ourselves with the difficulty that intellect alone cannot know existents since its object is quiddity, and sensible quiddity may or may not exist. Nor need we concern ourselves with the like difficulty, that sense knows only *sensibilia propria* or *communia*, and these are not existence. Quite true. But these difficulties lie along the road we have not taken. Putting sense and intellect together in human knowledge from the beginning, we have made it impossible to ask how to relate the two. As if sense and intellect were two halves of knowledge which we must needs join in order to form a unit! Sense and intellect are

<sup>2</sup> The remark is St. Thomas's: *Derisibile videtur ut, dum eorum quae nobis manifesta sunt, notitiam quaerimus, alia entia in medium afferamus, quae non possunt esse eorum substantiae, cum ab eis differant secundum esse. . . . Summa Theol. I. q. 84, a. 1, resp.*

<sup>3</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 6.

not put together by us. They are not related by us. They are together, given as a unit, from the beginning, all along, and at the end of all human knowing. We have nothing to do about it at all. So unified is the given unity of sense and intellect that we cannot even separate the two and continue to talk about human knowledge. Not only is it impossible for us to do this, it is also — here is an anticlimax for the sake of sophists — nonsensical. The reason is: if human knowledge be given as unit, a composite of sense and intellect, to ask then how to relate the two is equivalent to asking how to relate conceptual knowledge (which cannot exist in us apart from sense knowledge) to sense knowledge (apart from which conceptual knowledge cannot exist) in order that conceptual knowledge may exist apart from that without which it cannot exist at all. This is nonsense, a dead end.

Another dead end may be reached by a false start from the viewpoint of being. The false start is an essentialist metaphysic. The fundamental persuasion of such a metaphysic is that there are things which do not exist, a position in metaphysics paralleling the Platonic noetic we just saw. Essentialism adverts to the truth that the act of existing affects a subject of existence. Instead of advertent to the equally true proposition, that a subject of existence would be as meaningless as it is null unless it were of existence that it is a subject, essentialism goes on to philosophize upon those subjects as if they were not subjects of existence. Thus, essentialism succeeds in talking of essences as if their being, actual or possible, somehow “stood up” stiff with reality, apart from the act of existing which accrues or can accrue to it. The fact is, for a realist the act of existing, to which essences are or can be related in order to be even as much as essences—the act of existing is that which makes essences jell, that which is the steel in their concrete, the catalytic agent stiffening them into whatsoever reality they have, the rope which rescues them from the abyss. When, however, an essentialist conceives subjects of existence it would appear that he conceives them as cores around which is the skin of existence. Now, you can pull the skin from the core and still

have the core; just so, you can peel off existence and still have being—essentialist being. A realist, though he does distinguish subjects of existence from their act of existing, knows full well that if the skin of existence, actual or possible, is peeled off from his essences, there isn't anything left, not anything.<sup>4</sup> Whatever factors there are in a realist's being—essences, matter, form, and the rest of it, these factors are factors only because they are existing or are so related to the act of existing that without that relation they would be nothing. Essences are that according to which and in which a thing has being.<sup>5</sup> Apart from the being to which they are actually or possibly related there are not any essences.

It is now time to resolve the issue.

That issue, as we have seen, is at the apex where human knowledge, undividedly one, meets being, undividedly one. That apex is experience, knowledge whose object is known as existing. If we described experience as purely sensuous, or, alternatively, as purely intellectual; if we described being as essences apart from their act of existing, or *vice versa*, as an act of existing apart from a subject of existence, we should have not one apex but at least four, none of which can be a judgment of existence. Sense alone can meet existents, but sense alone cannot know that they are existent. Intellect alone could meet quiddities alone, but quiddities may and they may not exist. Essences as taken quite apart from any relation to the act of existing by which they are even so much as essences, are nothing. The act of existing as taken quite apart from the subject of existence (unless that act be also the subject: the case of God) cannot exist either. To keep the issue resolvable, therefore, we must keep one apex, experience, the juncture of undivided knowledge and undivided being.

The resolution is as simple as this: We know that there are things because we feel them. To urge against this evidence of feeling the phenomena of hallucinations, dreams, and so on, is a pretty piece of sophistry. The sophistry consists in this:

<sup>4</sup> *In Lib. Boet. de Hebd.* l. 2. Et ideo, sicut possumus dicere.

<sup>5</sup> *De Ente et Essentia*, C. 1.

Since it is not evident that we feel things in dreams, or, if you will, since it is evident *post factum* that we did not feel things in dreams, therefore we do not feel or do not know we feel things when we are not dreaming. The sophistry is quite like that of one who maintains that because there are sound and unsound hearts, as there are, and because we cannot tell *before* examination whether a heart is sound or unsound, therefore we are not sure or cannot tell at all even *after examination*. Obviously if one wishes to fabricate a class of hearts which are neither sound nor unsound before examination, and then identify such a fabricated class with the beating hearts, calling *them* neither sound nor unsound, one surely may. But then a sound heart will have to be defined as one which would be unsound if it were not sound—quite as Taine defined a true sensation: that which would be an hallucination if it were not an hallucination, *une vraie hallucination*. Such is the *reductio ad absurdum* of one who denies the evidence of sensation. The difference between seeing this paper and not seeing it, or merely thinking you see it, is measured precisely by seeing this paper. This is evidence.

It is evidence not precisely to the senses alone; alone, the senses feel only sensible qualities, and these qualities are not existence. It is evidence not exactly to the intellect alone; alone, the intellect knows only quiddities, and quiddities may or may not exist. It is evidence to the composite knowledge, sensible and intellectual, of the knower, man. The reason is that man knows by his intellect that what he feels exists. Intellect alone does not know that things exist; sense alone does not feel the existence of existents. But since neither sense nor intellect is alone, man's knowledge in the judgments of existence is both sensible and intellectual. A man knows that which he feels exists. Nor can he feel with evidence everything feelable without knowing that what he feels exists. This intellectual knowledge of the felt thing's existence is not a transmutation of sensible evidence into intellectual evidence, a transmutation of propositions 2 into propositions 1, 3, 4. Nor is it a transmutation of intellectual evidence, propositions 1, 3, 4 into propositions 2. It



is a knowledge by the intellect of the existence of sensibly experienced existents.

Let us expand the point. All judgments other than those of class 2 involve actual or possible being in general, that which is or can be. The judgment of existence alone, propositions 2, predicates the act of existing of its subject, the sensibly experienced existent. Now, being in general is not the act of existing: it is that which has or can have such an act. We never know immediately, that is, apart from proof, whether or not a subject of existence has the act of existing unless we, say, punch it. Then we know, and it is by our intellect that we know that what we punch exists. If one cares to say the knowledge of being is abstract knowledge, well and good. It is. But the abstraction of being in general, which being is involved in propositions 1, 3, 4, is not the same as the abstraction of the act of existing from the sensibly experienced existent in judgments of existence. In this last case, two lines converge and meet in the existential judgment: the line of unitary being and the line of unitary knowledge. The line of unitary being: because the act of existing is inseparable from the sensible quiddity, just as sensible quiddity is inseparable from its act of existing. The line of unitary knowledge: because the intellectual knowing that a thing exists is inseparable from the sensible experience of the existent, just as the sensible experience which is evident is inseparable from the intellectual knowing of the existent. Evidently experienced sensibles cannot be sensed without their being known, intellectually, to exist; contrariwise, immediate knowledge of an existent cannot be had without the sensible experience of that existent. The meaning of "being in general" can be known apart from actually knowing any instance of it. As an abstraction from particular and common sensibles (this flesh, flesh), as an abstraction also from particular and common intelligibles (ox, substance), "being in general" retains that which is analogously true of anything from which it abstracts, namely, that which is or can be. But being, as the act of existing of whatever is sensibly experienced, abstracts, if one must use the word, not *from* the sensibly experienced

datum; it abstracts *in* that sensibly experienced datum that by reason of which the datum is felt, and that is the datum's act of existing. We cannot remove, abstract, the act of existing from the object which we immediately know exists, because if we did there would not be any object left; nor can we divorce the sense experience of an existent from the intellectual knowledge that the sensibly experienced does exist, because then there would not be any knowledge left, not any human knowledge at any rate. Thus there is on the side of being an *ens concretum quidditati sensibili*; on the side of knowledge there is, to parallel the terminology of Cajetan, a *cognitio concreta sensationi*. (A modern might name human knowledge an osmotic unit. St. Thomas knew about this osmosis; only, he calls it *quaedam refluentia*). When the two, *ens* . . . and *cognitio* . . . , meet, the quiddity does not lose its being; if it did, there would not be anything left; nor does the *cognitio* of the existent cease to be concretised with sensation of it; if it did, there would not be human *cognitio* left.

It is perhaps now apparent that though the source of all knowledge in us is first principles, propositions 1 ("all our knowledge originally consists in the knowledge of first principles"), nevertheless, the source of first principles in us is sensation ("but the knowledge of these principles arises in us from sense").<sup>6</sup> Now, the source of sensation is an existent "which according to its wholly complete being is outside the soul, such as are the complete beings, a man, a stone."<sup>7</sup> Thus existents are the origin of the origin (sensation) of the origin (first principles) of all human knowledge. The act of being of existents is the placental cord connecting both their factors (sensibility and intelligibility); the act of their being is also the placental cord tying them to sensation, sensation to the judgments of existence, these judgments to whatsoever else we may know. If we regard propositions 1, 3, 4 as involving an hypothesis, viz., as expressing what must be so if anything is so, propositions 1 posit that hypothesis by the experience of being.

<sup>6</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 51, a. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *In I Lib. Sent.* d. 19. q. 5, a. 1, sol.

Thus it is that experience functions in knowledge as God functions in nature. Without God there is no nature without experience there is no knowledge.

If idealists persist in demanding how we know all this, we must hasten to assure them with M. Gilson that we do not know any of this without the evidence of sensation, and if one still seeks the evidence of the evident, *res sunt*, we must resolutely refuse to pursue the inquiry.

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## DANTE AND THOMISM

By DANIEL SARGENT



“DANTE, are you a Thomist poet?”

Dante does not answer our question from the next world, nor would he answer it were he in this, for he never turned his head to foolish questions.

Yet some Thomists do crowd round Dante, and they will ask questions. “I make a party by myself,” he said, yet they follow him as he goes off to be alone, and they have plenty of questions in their hearts:

“He must be a philosopher, mustn’t he? He has been to the thirteenth-century Sorbonne. From his verses we can see that he knows of our quarrels.”

“Perhaps he is celebrating Thomism in his *Divine Comedy*?”

“At any rate, isn’t he ours, our poet, for he is a living refutation of the claim of the men of the Renaissance that no Aristotelian could be a poet? They took the name of poet for each and all of them, but the world has forgotten it. Dante took the name, and the world still accords it to him. He defined Aristotle as the ‘Master of those who know’ and the world quotes even the definition as a verse of poetry.”

So they discourse; and I would make a few comments.

Dante was not a philosopher. He cannot be patronized by professional philosophers as one who might have made a name among them if he had not failed and slunk off into the domain of poetry where he could not be contradicted. Dante began to “*ragionar*” in verse as soon as he could speak “*per isfogar la mente*.” He was a poet.

Nor was he a poet who did not know his vocation and in false ambition wished to excel as a philosopher. He made it very clear in the *Divine Comedy* that what he wanted was the laurel wreath.

In fact, the title philosopher he accorded without much ceremony exclusively to the unbaptized thinkers, the whole



family of whom he placed in Limbo. Their inability, in spite of all their talents, to arrive anywhere without faith was something which he had carefully explained to him in Paradise. He put in Limbo not only Democritus, who could find no rhyme or reason anywhere, but also Aristotle, who detected a scheme in things.

Dante had a high esteem for Saint Thomas Aquinas, so high that he did not even call him a philosopher. He encountered him in Heaven as one of the burning suns that around him circled in a crown. He was grouped with Saint Bonaventure, who was not a Thomist, and Siger of Brabant, who was even less a Thomist. He was one of the wise, one of the prudent, and the one of them of whom Dante asked the most questions, and from whom he received an explanation of form and matter. He inveighed against rash judgment. Yet he was not in the highest sphere of Heaven. Above him were the courageous, and higher still the just, and higher again the contemplatives, Saint Peter Damiani and Saint Benedict.

Neither in his life nor in his poem did Dante show any predilection for the company of philosophers. In the *Divine Comedy* he chose four guides from those personally dear to him. They were Virgil, Statius, Beatrice, and Saint Bernard. No one of these was a philosopher.

It might be claimed that he changed these characters into philosophers in his poem. Virgil, for instance, is usually referred to by commentators as representing natural Reason, and it can be conceded that he does become more of a moralizer in the *Divine Comedy* than he is in the *Aeneid*; but he remains even then the celebrator of the unbaptized yet to-be-baptized Roman Empire, which Dante prized even over-highly, and in the praising of it shows to Dante the way to celebrate the Eternal Empire, love-commanded, of which God is the Imperator. Virgil did not become transmuted into a philosopher. Saint Bernard, furthermore, became less of a philosopher in the *Divine Comedy* than he was on earth. He became the poet of our Lady, "*Vergine Madre*."

Certainly Dante was not celebrating in his poem any system

of philosophy, as was Lucretius in his *De Rerum Natura*. He was celebrating neither a philosophy into which fits Christianity, as Santayana insinuates, nor one which fits into Christianity. He was not celebrating a philosophy any more than a writer who writes in good grammar is celebrating good grammar. He was not celebrating it even secondarily. Under God Dante was celebrating Beatrice, who is usually interpreted to be a Florentine maiden, Beatrice Portinari, whom he elevated and purified into an embodiment of theology. The late Père Mandonnet believed that she had never been a flesh-and-blood maiden at all. She stood, so he maintained, for a priestly or spiritual vocation which Dante had started on and then had abandoned. But however that may be, Beatrice at least ended as Theology and not as Thomism, not even Thomism turned into Theology. Beatrice was constantly (in the *Paradiso*) smiling, and Thomism as a philosophy does not smile, and is not meant to smile.

But Dante was not only a poet, he was a man, and as a man he could at times play the philosopher. When he played the philosopher, was he a Thomist philosopher? Certainly not in all parts of the *De Monarchia*, and according to Gilson he was not so in the symbolism of the *Divine Comedy*. I doubt if he himself knew quite what he was. He would have hung back, I believe, from joining a Thomist or any other philosophical party.

It might be well to go on in this fashion to show all the ways in which Dante could be distinguished from Thomists, in order to prove that no matter how far one went, there remained plenty of reasons to group him with the Thomists. But the fact is, the closer we scrutinize him in order to separate him from them, the more unique he becomes to our eyes, and the more Thomist because of that uniqueness.

For half-a-thousand years we have been used to intellectually unoptimistic poets. At first they were seeking for a beautiful unbelieved fable on which to write, leaving reality to the writers of prose. In solemn moments they did celebrate what they held true, but then they styled their verses sacred poetry, and they

accepted its field as limited. Milton did try to revive sacred poetry into a grand epic, but for sacred subject he could go only to the Bible. Thus make-believe became the domain of the poets, and they entered it as if ready not to have poetry too important. But then when the new generations began to take poetry a little more seriously, and when, especially in the English language, they wished to find in it a religion, and were too earnest to give delight by mere fable, they wrote poetry by closing their eyes, or giving to their intellect an opiate lest it break the spell. They would swoon into poetry, or forget how much they knew. Matthew Arnold could scarcely find subjects on which to write, so much bitter enlightenment he thought he had. Wordsworth was appalled by the Deist's machine of nature. He would not analyze with his intellect lest he see that machine. He sought something stiller, sadder, a spirit under it all, that would make him wise. He was anti-intellectual.

Dante did not fear Nature. Nature to him was no machine, neither was it God. He looked at "Thomist Nature"—reality—which had depth, which was rich in content.

Neither did he search for a fable, in which he did not believe, on which to write. Nor would he become a truncated man when he became a poet, nor a superman. He would be an entire man, intellect and all. He was the Christian Humanist, the integral Humanist after the Thomist pattern. Confident in himself as a man he was, as far as his mere manhood would take him, yet humble and ready in Purgatory to sleep at night till grace prepared him for his next day's journey.

There was something brave about him, and optimistic. He could find the meaning of things, and furthermore he could turn that meaning into poetry.

"I will effuse myself like a season," said Walt Whitman, but it was what Dante did not say, and would not have done. He would not have done it as a philosopher nor as a poet. He had had too much Scholastic training for that.

Dante never regarded himself as a season, and he would have considered it unmanly to liken himself to anything so amorphous. Also it would have been disrespectful to the universe to

effuse himself on it; it was God's. He stood as a man with a God-given intellect before a universe which God had made. His mind was not something to throw away. It was the heroic in him; it was his sword. He said of man's mind in *Il Convivio*: "*Per che è manifesto che per Mente s'intende questa ultima e nobilissima parte dell' Anima.*" Dante's epic was to be the story of what he could do with his sword, and of the victory ensuing which would make his life not a tragedy.

"The Intellect is born to cut things to pieces," is not a saying of Saint Thomas, but it is a paraphrase of *Intellectus natus est dividere ea quae secundum rem coniuncta est*, which he did say. And the Schoolmen were always saying "I distinguish," and were also ever distinguishing, splitting, splitting. Dante was taught the value of cutting with his intellect, and had some of the pride of a virtuoso simply in being able to cut keenly. He divided Pope Boniface VIII from the office he held, damned Boniface the man most ignominiously to Hell with his legs kicking up in the air, and at the same time celebrated him as Pope when, at Alagna receiving the buffets of the French, he showed himself as a majestic figure renewing Christ's Passion.

The fame of this instance of Dante's cutting must not hide the fact that it was everywhere that Dante was cutting with the same nicety. In any single circle of Hell, where men were condemned for a single sin, he did not set men who were merely duplicates one of the other. He defined each circle of Hell by putting in it the best that could be there, and the worst. In the very first circle, that of carnality, there were Paolo and Francesca, to whom he was drawn, and Semiramis from whose vicious lechery he shrank.

In wielding his sword Dante also prided himself on not letting its stroke veer through any private emotion. He separated Paolo and Francesca from Semiramis, but not the circle of their damnation from that of Semiramis, not though he swooned in anguish at the punishment of Paolo and Francesca. Implicitly he was saying to himself: "I will *not* effuse myself like a season."

Dante was relentless and constant with his sword. He separ-



ated himself from God. He separated Hell from Purgatory, and Purgatory from Heaven. He wrote his *Divine Comedy* by making divisions, or, as some would say, by splitting hairs.

In the *Divine Comedy* he even shows his contempt for those who do not cut. The damned in Hell were those who had lost the good of the intellect.

Said Virgil:

Noi sem venuti al luogo ov'io t'ho detto  
Che vederai le gente dolorose,  
C'hanno perduto 'l ben dell' intelletto.

But there were others not worth putting in Hell. These were those in Hell's vestibule—"sub-human liberals"—who would not decide what the intellect should decide.

But cutting with the intellect does not provide a poet with a poem, nor even with anything to write a poem about. Scholastics after they have done their work are often blamed for leaving nothing but abstractions—mere lifeless bones, motionless—the horror of poets. Dante was not horrified; he went on and embodied these bones. No sooner had he faced the abstractions than, with the flash of his imagination, he clothed them into existence, making them appear in the most concrete and particular form. No dawn brightens in the *Divine Comedy* that is merely *a* dawn; it is a particular dawn at a particular season, on a particular date, in a particular locality. Homer has the night come ever with a sameness, and the description of it has the charm of a refrain. No two nights come the same to Dante. He recreates a universe out of the most strikingly particular things he has ever experienced, out of landscapes—like the cliffs at La Turbie—which he could not forget, out of days as individual as that in the Alps when the snow fell and there was no wind, out of human beings, whom he had faced in history, or even more intimately in his streets of Florence. He took the universe and turned it inside out till it stared at him with its meaning visible in most particular symbols.

Certainly this was not all of it the work of a philosopher, but it was based on a trust in philosophy.

It was not even reasonable for him to think that he could be

as sure of the virtues and vices of his fellow citizens as he was willing to be. In his fierce particular judgments he most surely was often unjust, as he in a milder moment acknowledged might be the case—yet those neighbors who were unjustly judged could glory in the immortality he gave them. At the same time it was for the sake of showing the nature of the universe that he chose such definite symbols, not for the sake of personal vindictiveness. It emphasized the philosophical truth that even the homeliest, most provincial neighborhood was woven of meanings. There is no forgotten, insignificant man in Creation, not even our nearest neighbor.

Thus Dante took his metaphysics so seriously that it aroused his imagination to the creating of the most complete and vivid of dreams. In it he saw people as they are, not as they merely seem. Milton sang that the hypocrite was known to God alone, but Dante could tell a hypocrite: he was walking in Hell, and could be recognized by his robe of gilded lead, which Dante saw so clearly that he could describe it as being of the cut of those of the monks at Cologne in Germany. Yes, he could see him in Hell, and so robed, even if he encountered him living in Florence, and even though by courtesy and restraint he deferred, till the man's death, assigning him to his perdition.

We cannot fail to remark, in reading the *Divine Comedy*, that Dante did not make his great tour through Creation as a disembodied intellect, for in a dozen or more places he draws our attention to the fact that he, different from the dead, had a body. In the *Inferno*, he weighed down the boat of Charon. He caused considerable consternation to a sheep-like crowd trooping round the Mount of Purgatory by casting a shadow. This not only adds to the drama on his journey; it emphasizes that Dante thought he could approach God with an Aristotelian body. The last thing he wanted to do was to become a hasty angel.

To have a body does not mean to Thomists to bear a burden of so many pounds weight, but to have the help of five senses. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante shows every consideration to the five senses. In the *Inferno* it is dark and the eyes are

inhibited, but touch, the lowest sense, has in this lowest region an important work. On occasion he measures Hell's landscape as an inchworm does, by sprawling upon it, climbing up broken bridge-spans, belly to every stone of them. He even gropes to the centre of the earth, clutching to the hairy thighs of head-down Lucifer.

As soon as Dante is out of Hell, he rejoices to be able to see with his eyes once more. First there are the stars overhead instead of a cavern, and then the oriental sapphire of the dawn appears. From then on, especially after he has really climbed to the terraces of the mount of purification, his touch becomes less important. His weight does not force him down upon earth. The ethereal sense of sight knows always where the sun is. Colors and pictures are beautiful. But he is not dizzy before such beauties. He is able still to be the keen astronomer.

When he comes to Paradise, he is so high as to be able to dispense with three senses: touch, smell, and taste. Hearing stays with him, but what it gives is but an accompaniment to seeing. Seeing is sovereign. He becomes an eye. It is true that from time to time his eyes have to look to Beatrice's smile in order to be able to see to a higher sphere. It is also true that at the last thunderclap even sight becomes unnecessary in the union with God, but nevertheless it is with his eyes that he beholds the rose of the Church Triumphant. He will not relinquish his undizzy sight until he has to. Sight is given most lordly honor.

This Thomistic respect for the clear-cut and definitely perceived had a Thomistic effect on the architecture of his poem. What that effect is can be gathered by comparing the *Divine Comedy* with *Paradise Lost*. Milton attains to the sublime by calling in a vague hugeness. He hypnotizes us into immensity by an organ music accompaniment. Who can therefore draw a precise picture of Milton's angels? Or who plot the Miltonic landscape without becoming trivial and grotesque? Dante on the other hand measures the very stature of his demons, and Hell is described so precisely that an engineer could make a drawing of it as of a fortification. Purgatory too is as definite

as any hill plotted by surveyors. In Heaven the altitudes of the spheres are not mathematically given, but the proportions are there. And every commentator on Dante draws a diagram of his three-fold universe. Dante none the less attains to the sublime, and he does it by showing the amazing relation of the details one to another. Thus Dante's poem is not a baroque basilica, but a Gothic cathedral, or a Sainte Chapelle.

Dante said to Virgil: "Through you I was poet, through you a Christian." The Thomists can say to Dante: "Through us you have written a poem that is as fresh and pristine as Homer, and yet intellectually mature. You have not tried to go back and forget. You have pressed forward to know more, in order to make your poem the more beautiful. You are unique in that respect among the epic poets for hundreds of years, for they have been sophisticated and could not write anything simple as an epic. But we educated you, and with your knowledge you could sing. Surely your head, which we are glad to have you hold erect and proud, can make a slight inclination to us."

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# MATTER, BEATITUDE AND LIBERTY

By ANTON C. PEGIS

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## I

OF all the frontier issues on the boundaries between Greek and Christian thought, there is one problem which has had an importance and an influence second to none. It is a problem that is to be found somewhere near the very center of the actual development of Greek philosophy, conditioning its vision and producing its outstanding doctrines and problems for over a thousand years of philosophical speculation. I refer to the problem of *matter*, to its origin and reality, and to its contribution to the intelligible ordering of the world. As everyone knows, in explaining the origin and the order of the world, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus make matter to enter as an *extraneous* cause into the intelligible structure of reality.

All three of these thinkers are united in being immaterialists in their explanations of the origin of the world; but their immaterialism is based on the tacit assumption that the world of sensible beings is entirely intelligible in the essences which it contains but *not* entirely intelligible in the beings in which these essences reside. The question, be it observed, is not merely one of distinguishing between an intelligible essence and a concrete sensible singular. Such a distinction is the great achievement of Plato and Aristotle, as St. Thomas Aquinas regularly points out.<sup>1</sup> The present question is much more serious than this recognition that there are substances in the sensible world and that in these substances it is possible to distinguish intelligible natures from the individuating conditions under which these natures are found within the realm of sensible things. The most radical issue, however, which the

<sup>1</sup> *De Potentia*, III, 5; *Summa Theologica*, I, 44, 2; *De Substantiis Separatis*, VII; *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, X, ad 8.

immaterialism of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus raises is what may be called *the dilemma of composite essences*.

I do not wish to raise this problem in all its generality, since I hope to return to it in another discussion. I merely wish to point to the issue as a background within which to consider the *Ethics* of Aristotle. The issue can be seen more sharply, for present purposes, if it is put in Christian terms, for then it may be seen as a problem in the relations between the divine ideas and creatures. To say that divine ideas are *creative* ideas is to say that they are *primarily* ideas of individuals, including material individuals.<sup>2</sup> Because the divine ideas are creative ideas, they are the causes of composite beings in their very compositeness. The world is intelligible even in its imperfections because matter itself is a creature and enters *from within*, and not extraneously, the ordering of the world by God. To say, therefore, that God creates the total reality of composite substances is not only to reverse the Greek decision on the relations between being and essence, it is also to free composite substances, man himself included, from that tragic and closed immobilism which was the price that the Greeks paid for world order. For if the Platonic Forms, the Aristotelian Species and the Plotinian Thought-Essences are not—and they are not—*creative* divine ideas, then not only is the order of the world a compromise with the irrational forces of matter, but the very destiny of man is threatened with the tragedy of this compromise.

I should like to illustrate this fact by proposing an interpretation of the doctrine of the end of man in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which may seem to many venturesome in the extreme. The interpretation is not at all new; but that is another story. I propose it in the conviction that, if we made an effort to see the *Metaphysics*, the *Physics*, the *Ethics* and the *De Anima* as works which were written, however disjointedly, by one and the same Aristotle, then we could not possibly undertake to ruin the Aristotelian *Physics* when we are concerned either with the theology of the *Metaphysics* or with the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, *De Veritate*, III, 5; III, 8 R and ad 2; VIII, 11; *Summa Theologica*, I, 15, 3, ad. 3.

doctrine of man in the *Ethics* and the *De Anima*. In short, just as it is true that there are serious troubles in store for those who have too easily translated the Platonic Forms into divine ideas, so it is true that there are very serious troubles in store for those who translate too easily the world of Aristotle into the Christian world of creatures. St. Thomas Aquinas, who has a very high esteem for Aristotle, nevertheless refuses to accept the astronomical physics of Aristotle as much as he refuses to accept the abstractionism of Plato.<sup>3</sup> And even where he does not openly quarrel with Aristotle, the reason is not that he has unknowingly Christianized Aristotle. The Aristotelian ethics is a case in point. Did Aristotle have a proper conception of the end of man? And did St. Thomas think that the Aristotelian man really escaped from the confines of the Aristotelian physics? If St. Thomas admits that the order of the world is not for Aristotle the product of a *creative* divine government, how could St. Thomas admit that the Aristotelian man achieved a destiny and a liberty which his very nature, and the nature of the world in which he lived, denied to him? What is the end of man—the fulfilment of the spiritual desires of the human person or the perpetuation of an eternal human species under the divine immobility of an eternal agent intellect? Let us, in fact, look at *this conflict between nature and person* in the philosophy of Aristotle: it is the point of location, within the Aristotelian physicism, of a doctrine of intelligence in God and in man which seeks, *against matter*, an explanation of the meaning of liberty and of beatitude.

## II

In order to state, in its most general terms, the issue with which I am here concerned, let me approach it from the side of God. Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus confront us with a doctrine of God in which God is intelligent but not free and in which the world, far from being a creature, is a limit to His divinity and a challenge to His power. It may be difficult to imagine a situa-

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*, V; *De Substantiis Separatis*, I-IV.

tion in which liberty and personality are not essential aspects of our idea of God. The Christian God is a Creator and a Father; He loves the world freely and He has freely produced it; and man is His creature and lives, as a free human person, under His government. Nothing is more natural to Christians than to think of God in this way as well as to think of man as living in a world which is so ruled and by such a God. And yet, curious as it may be, the very doctrines which give to the Christian idea of God, of the world and of man their deepest significance are exactly the doctrines which are missing in the classical Greek conceptions of God and man. A God without liberty and without personality is a veritable caricature in the Christian world. Yet it is a fact that the divine liberty and the divine autonomy are doctrines which are non-existent throughout the whole history of Greek philosophy. The notion of liberty remains singularly undeveloped in Greek philosophy. Indeed, we may say even more. We may say that Greek thought developed towards the notion of *necessity* rather than towards the notion of *liberty*, and towards the notion of *stability* rather than towards the notion of *autonomy*. In brief, Greek intellectualism presents a doctrine of God and man which, in effect, *resists* the development of the ideas of personality and liberty.

When we look at the God of Aristotle, for example—supposing always that we can speak of the Aristotelian God in the singular, which is at least problematical—it is not difficult to see that He is an intelligence, that He is thinking of the best possible object and that in this consists His peace and His tranquility. But where is the liberty of the Aristotelian God? And why is there not a word in Aristotle about the will and the power of God? The Christian God is no less an intelligent being than is the God of Aristotle, and yet, unlike the God of Aristotle, He is a God of power and liberty, a God Who includes within His perfection not only that He is most wise and most good, but also that He is autonomous and omnipotent. Why is the notion of the omnipotence and the liberty of God so prominent in Christian thought, and why is such a notion so completely absent from Aristotle?



Consider now the famous *Nicomachean Ethics*. Nothing illustrates more sharply the nature of the Aristotelian world, and especially its distinctively Hellenic character, than the problem of the destiny of man in the *Ethics*. For just as the Platonic man epitomizes the conflict between intelligibility and matter from the standpoint of the *origin* of the world, so the Aristotelian man epitomizes this very conflict from the standpoint of the *destiny* of the world. For the Aristotelian man is divided in this destiny. He pays tribute to matter, even to the matter of his own being, and in this lies his tragedy. It is not simply that his life in this world is a precarious one. That is true; but it need not be a tragedy. Nor is it that a heaven of beatitude is not the goal of his life. It is. His calamity is rather that his destiny as a human person is at odds with his nature. By as much as he is a man, he will always have one and only one foot in his cherished heaven; and by as much as he achieves his destiny he is no longer a man, indeed, he is no longer an individual human person. This is in fact the paradox of the Aristotelian man. But perhaps the paradox is itself a little more paradoxical than is ordinarily supposed. For even the Aristotelian heaven is paradoxical.

It does not seem that we have adverted sufficiently to the problem of human destiny such as it is found in the *Ethics*. It is ordinarily supposed that the *Ethics* of Aristotle is concerned with the end of man understood as the ordering of human conduct in this life. This assumption is based on the more or less implicit contention that since man has, in fact, no natural end, and since Aristotle cannot be speaking of what he does not know, namely, the supernatural end of man, he must be speaking of the only other possibility, namely, the ordering of human life in terms of the hierarchy of goods that befit man's nature. The *Ethics* would thus be a *normative* work in which Aristotle lays down the principles that enable man to arrange his values in the proper hierarchy and to organize his life in accord with them. I cannot deny, and I do not wish to deny, that Aristotle does this. The question is whether Aristotle is not also doing something else, namely, laying down the conditions of what is

for him the *natural terminal end* of man. The sort of happiness, therefore, that man can achieve in this life is the only happiness which he will ever achieve as an individual person; for this is the only life in which he will be an individual person. In a word, for the individual man, this earth is not only earth, it is also heaven—the heaven of a *human imitation* of the life and the beatitude of God. What thus renders the *Ethics* of tremendous importance, according to this interpretation, is that it is a theory of the only eternal life, and the only share in eternal life, which the individual man will ever have. For Aristotle would not then mean *only* that happiness in this life is precarious; he would mean something infinitely more serious than this: he would mean that man's share in his ultimate destiny, *enacted here and now*, is itself precarious.

I shall not insist on the general characteristics of Aristotelian ethics. They are both very well known and very enduring. Aristotelian ethics is, first of all, *teleological*. Secondly, Aristotelian ethics is *pluralistic*. For Aristotle the good is immanent in the diverse orders of being and, unlike the separate Good of Plato, its meaning varies with the diversity of being. In attacking Plato in the first book of the *Ethics*,<sup>4</sup> Aristotle denies not only the separation of the Forms, but also the very principle of the participation theory itself. For it he substitutes a theory of *imitation* which accords better with what may be called the immanentist pluralism of his own conception of the good. The Platonic separatism had destroyed essences and their diverse unities. The Aristotelian immanentism safeguards the conditions of *essential unity* within things. The question that remains is whether immanentism does not close the good of man within the limits of his essence: is the Aristotelian man trying to perfect his nature or merely to *enact* it? To look for the good of man,—is that to seek a fulfilment of the spiritual openness of his nature or is that merely to give man a budget to keep so that he will achieve continually the best bargain of a mixed nature? This is a crucial issue. Does the Aristotelian notion of a *closed* nature dissipate, by being closed, the end and the good

<sup>4</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 6, 1096<sup>a</sup> 11 ff.

of the human person? Now it is clear that happiness is the final end of man.<sup>5</sup> But consider the conditions.

What does happiness consist in? A first answer, tentatively given, is that the good of man consists in performing that work which is peculiarly a human activity. The good of an artist is to do the work of an artist. So with the carpenter and with the shoemaker. So with every part and member of man. So with man himself. Having a nature of a certain kind, he has a certain kind of work to do, and the pursuit of this work is his distinctive job as a man. Well, what is the work of a man? We are looking for the *distinctive* work of man. Not merely to live as do plants, therefore, nor yet merely to share in sentient life as do animals, but to live in accord with the reason and to do as perfectly as possible the work of the reason—this is the work of a man, his end and his good. In this lies his happiness, to act with the highest principle or part in himself in accord with the highest manner of exercising that principle throughout a whole lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

But again, what is the life of reason in man? Here Aristotle proposes two solutions which seem to be complementary to one another. The highest life of man consists in contemplation.<sup>7</sup> It consists in doing the work of being a wise man—such a wise man as Aristotle himself was when he wrote the *Metaphysics*. Thus understood, the highest life of man consists in being a metaphysician and in studying reality in terms of its highest causes and principles. The second best life for man is, not the life of reason itself, but a life of moral virtue ruled and directed by reason.<sup>8</sup> Aristotle invites man to achieve the highest life as much as possible because contemplation is, of all human activities, the least dependent on circumstances and the highest and most self-sufficient of human actions. In contemplation, man is not only within the highest part of himself, and in this sense distinctively himself; he is also as independent as possible of the contingencies of human fortune. Aristotle admits, however, that this life of contemplation is intermittent, and that

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 7, 1097<sup>a</sup> 15 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 7, 1097<sup>b</sup> 22 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, X, 7, 1177<sup>a</sup> 12 ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, X, 8, 1178<sup>a</sup> 9 ff.

while it is a life in which man immortalizes himself by being like the blessed gods when he thus lives according to reason and within it, yet it is a life which is more than human.<sup>9</sup>

What does this doctrine mean? Aristotle is saying that man has two ends, a first best and a second best, that his highest happiness consists in the first but that practically he must resign himself to accepting the second. More than this, however, Aristotle is saying that the problem of achieving the best possible life for man is a difficult one because Fortune may play a man false even at the end of his life. Old king Priam of Troy almost achieved the happy life. But the Trojan war had to come along and his sons, Hector and Paris, had to die; and so, at the very moment when Priam might have achieved the happy life, Fortune upset his applecart. One swallow does not make a spring; nor does one day make a happy life. Assuredly not, but let us be sure we understand the extent of old Priam's misfortune. It was not merely that his life had an unhappy ending; it was rather that Fortune had cheated him, during his *only* existence, of some part of the sum total of his beatitude. Would it not be strange, observes Aristotle,<sup>10</sup> would it not be strange for *me* to say that the dead are happy? After all, it is Aristotle himself who makes happiness to consist in a certain *activity*! Now what is the point of this irony? Or rather, why should Aristotle think it so ironical for him to speak of the dead as happy? Why cannot a man be happy in the end that he reaches? There is point to the Aristotelian irony, and it ought not to go unnoticed. On the one hand, Aristotle does not wish to credit a man with a happy life until he can survey that life as a whole; on the other hand, when Aristotle comes to survey that life as a whole, he looks upon it, not as entering into its eternal destiny, *but merely as surviving in the recollection of others*, and he looks back upon that life as having finished its personal existence.

If this conclusion is in the right direction, the real Aristotelian problem is not that the earthly life of man is subject to chance and to Fortune; it is rather that this Fortune which

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, X, 7, 1177<sup>b</sup> 24 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 10, 1100<sup>a</sup> 10 ff.



enters as an evil deity into the lives of men can snatch from them whatever share in *immortality* is rightfully theirs in terms of their natures. In a word, the Aristotelian problem is that Fortune challenges an individual man in the achievement of his destiny and that the achievement of this destiny is something which does not lie entirely within the power of man to control and to direct. In spite of how man lives, in spite of being the wisest Socrates, he might, I say he might, be deprived of whatever share in eternal life belongs to him in the name of his nature.

### III

Why should the life, indeed the very destiny, of man be so subject to Fortune? Those who look at the present life of man from the standpoint of his eternal destiny may possibly miss the meaning of this question. Let us therefore leave aside the various Christianized Aristotles that have been brought forth in the course of history; let us ask merely whether such a mixed destiny for man, such a combination of eternity and time, is not in accord with the indestructible hierarchy of the Aristotelian world. To a Christian, the world may be a sea of troubles, but it is the world of time, not of eternity: he can still look to eternity. And that, as it seems to me, is the issue. For how can there be any sort of other-worldliness in the *Ethics* of Aristotle if none is possible within the framework of the Aristotelian *Physics*? It is because eternity and time meet in man's present life that Aristotle is so worried about the vicissitudes of history. Under the vault of heaven, man is the sort of being for whom immortality consists in seeking the immobility of intelligence as the true anchorage of a human nature which exists in history only by expending itself through its individuals. In the best sense of those misunderstood words, Aristotle can say (if I may mix languages): *Carpe diem!* Heaven and immortality are passing away! How could it be otherwise? The Aristotelian *Physics* of a divinized world, and therefore of a worldly heaven circulating in time, does not permit any other-worldliness. If man looks to God, it is in and through this life: he approaches and imitates, in his self-enclosed human way, the divine immobility.

God is not for him—except as a distant ideal of world order, an ideal to be imitated in the chiaroscuro of an eternalized time.

The *Ethics* begins to be an exciting book when we see that it is both a statement of how man should organize his earthly life and a treatise on the only life of happiness that man as man will ever have. Heaven itself is in the balance when Aristotle fears the kicks of Fortune. Hence the real problem: what is a destiny which is essentially not free of the danger of being missed—even as with Priam, at that last moment in life, when that last swallow did not come in?

In the Aristotelian fear of Fortune there lies, it seems to me, an important answer to the problem of the unity of his thought. For Aristotle to fear Fortune as he does is to fear that the order of the world is, in principle, partly irrational and under the dominion of a principle of irrationality. Both the disunity which besets the Aristotelian man and the precariousness which besets his destiny can be understood in terms of a division in man and in the world, a division which is unavoidable in man because it is radically imbedded in the world in which he lives. The Aristotelian man lacks both *unity* and *certainty* with respect to his destiny. He lacks *unity* because he can either achieve a highest good, in which however he cannot share as a man, since it is so exclusively the good of the reason alone that when he achieves it he is no longer a man but a reason; or he can achieve a good in which he shares as a whole man but which, in that case, is not his highest good. He lacks *certainty* because the disunity within himself exists on a much larger scale in the world. In fine, just as matter within man is the cause of man's disunity with respect to his destiny, so matter in the world is the cause of the precariousness of his achievement of that destiny. Once more matter is the great enemy, and once more we are driven to ask the point of view from which this conclusion is an understandable one. It is more than curious that the order of the world should be such that, though man might escape the arrows of outrageous Fortune, there is no principle which can free him entirely from Fortune and which can make his destiny secure and certain. But because the same thing is

taking place within and outside man, we can begin to understand what it is that is at work here. Even after the life of man is as ordered as it can possibly be, it is only imperfectly and incompletely ordered: the *ambiguity* of human destiny indicates that. Even after the world is as ordered as it can possibly be, it is only imperfectly ordered: the *precariousness* of human destiny indicates that. We cannot possibly misunderstand this compromise within and outside man; for it proclaims very plainly that matter is an enemy to the destiny of man because it enters his essence and the world itself as an alien to the providence of God.

What ideal of God and of man can a philosopher have if matter defeats the destiny of man and limits the government of God? Why should Aristotle, who knows something about the intellectual nature of man and of God, never have set the achievement of a free human personality as man's goal? Why must man be defeated as a person in order to be perfected as a nature? And why should Aristotle never have considered liberty and autonomy in God as the marks of divine perfection? The fact cannot be doubted. Liberty and autonomy cannot be ideals of the Aristotelian notion of intelligence either in God or in man. It is entirely natural that Aristotle should fear contingency and it is inevitable that *his* conception of a necessary being should exclude every notion of contingency. For contingency is to Aristotle the sign of an enemy at work in the world—matter.

Have we considered sufficiently the significance of such a situation? In the world of Aristotle the intelligence of man must, in its search for freedom, pass by the conditions which matter introduces into the universe; and it must pass by these conditions on the supposition that matter is not a creature of God. We are thus dealing here with an ideal of intelligence which includes within itself flight from matter and from the conditions of matter as the means of achieving independence from the irrationality which matter introduces into the world. If God is somehow a self-sufficient being, and if He is a perfect and necessary being, He is self-sufficient and perfect and neces-

sary in the sense that He excludes from His nature and His power every vestige of contingency. The Aristotelian God is free in the sense that, so long as He stays within His own intelligence, He is as independent from the contingencies of matter as he can possibly be. His freedom is a *minimum* thing. It is the freedom of a God who, having fenced Himself off from matter, does not suffer, because He does not know, the irrationality that is constantly defeating His image in the world. He must be an intelligence, therefore, in the sense that He must stay within intelligence in order to avoid matter, even as the embattled Roman emperors were destined to strive to mend the crumbling fences of the empire in order to avoid the barbarians. God is free within intelligence, but by all means He is a prisoner within intelligence. Thought is His life and only thought, but that is because in the immobility of thought lies His freedom from contingency. He must think on thought in order to stay barricaded within His castle, and the only autonomy that He knows consists in limiting Himself to thought in order to avoid its enemies in the world. Liberty makes as little sense in the Aristotelian conception of God as the barricaded God of Aristotle makes sense in Christian thought. Rigid necessity is His great ideal, both in Himself and in the world: in Himself, in order to be proof against contingency, and in the world, in order to have contingency stay within bounds. Necessitarianism must therefore be the ideal of the Aristotelian cosmology because necessitarianism is the only way of proclaiming the rights of intelligence in a world where matter is an inevitable and compromising opponent.

If a necessity which excludes contingency is the ideal of the Aristotelian God, a *stability* which yields to contingency as little as possible is the ideal of the Aristotelian man. He too flies from the slings and arrows of Fortune, but, unlike the Aristotelian God, he is a target for them. Like God, he must try to become as little subject to Fortune as possible; unlike God, though this is his ideal, he can achieve it only in part and at a price. He is not just an intelligence, he is composed of soul and body, and to look to God as his ideal is by so much to leave



his humanity in external darkness. Like a beacon on a hill, the Aristotelian God is always there proclaiming to Aristotle that he become as much as possible what is divine. But after all, the beacon is only on the hill, and Aristotle is down in the valley of the world trying to reach, in a human and piecemeal way, an ideal which he never really achieves so long as he remains a man and yet whose substance consists only in this piecemeal achieving. Let me not call this a pessimistic view of man. Let me rather say that it is a view of man which tries as much as possible to be optimistic but which, because it fears matter and contingency, breaks the destiny of man upon the wheel of necessity and confines God to the prison house of His intelligence in order to keep Him above the storms of the world.

#### IV

I realize that such reflections concerning the Aristotelian God are rather well known and perhaps widely accepted. We have all become conscious of them at least in the last decade since the publication of Gilson's *Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*. But I wonder whether it is not time for Scholastic thinkers to consider seriously the problem of the destiny of man in the Aristotelian *Ethics*. To say that the end of man which Aristotle proposes in the *Ethics* is a temporal end in the sense that Aristotle either did not add or did not know a *further* destiny for man is to suppose what is, in the light of the Aristotelian physics, an impossibility. There is no evidence within the *Ethics* for such an *exclusively temporal and normative* view of man. Nor could there be. Riveted by his very nature to the indestructible order of the world, how could the Aristotelian man dream of being anything so humble as a *creature*? Within the eternity of his nature, he includes a divine immobility because of his intelligence and a temporal mutability because of the matter that he informs. Eternal by nature, he must yet strive to achieve the immortality which is his because of his intelligence but which he must work to realize in himself—ἐφ' ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανάτῃεν—against and across the potentiality of matter.

This is far from being a conclusion. In reality, we are here only at the beginning of the problem of the relations between *soul* and *intelligence* in the philosophy of Aristotle. The same is true of the problem of immortality. Exactly in what terms would the problem of immortality present itself in a totally this-worldly view of man? Beatitude and immortality are here—open to man in the world of time because the world of time is an inferior eternity. Now, to crowd eternity into man's present life may be to have a poor notion of eternity; but, anyhow, it enables us to see that *if* that is the case, the only condition on which it is at all possible is that man be *in part* always in existence. And this must mean also that the problem of immortality cannot be, for Aristotle, a problem of personal immortality.

St. Thomas Aquinas is not without having seen this sorrowful conclusion in Aristotelianism. I shall not say that this was always his opinion on the question, for his thought is nowhere more elusive than on the subject of Aristotle's psychology. But at least in the *Contra Gentiles* he acknowledged openly the this-worldly rigidity which encompasses the Aristotelian soul. It might not seem so. Having proved that the highest beatitude of man consists in the contemplation of God,<sup>11</sup> St. Thomas is faced by the efforts of the commentators of Aristotle to add to man, as he exists in this life, a vision of spiritual substances. Now what did Aristotle think? At first glance, St. Thomas appears to free Aristotle from Averroes by asserting that in the *Ethics* Aristotle lays down a theory *only* of the highest felicity of man *in this life*: "Patet ergo quod opinio Aristotelis fuit quod ultima felicitas, *quam homo in hac vita acquirere potest*, sit cognitio de rebus divinis, qualis per scientias speculativas haberi potest."<sup>12</sup>

Let us not be too sure that this settles the question: we have still two more hurdles to surmount. For, the highest felicity of man is *not* found in this life.<sup>13</sup> What, then, of Aristotle? Did

<sup>11</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, III, 37.—There are difficulties of interpretation even within the limits of the *Contra Gentiles*, as anyone who compares books II and III will discover.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, III, 44.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, III, 48.

he or did he not speak of the *ultima felicitas* of man? Now observe the situation: St. Thomas poses to himself the Aristotelian objection that, in the present life, man cannot have more than an *imperfect* happiness. Of course St. Thomas admits the objection; but he admits much more. To the objector he admits that according to Aristotle man can achieve only a human, that is, an imperfect, beatitude in this life. He insists however, that this does not touch his own demonstration. For to leave the destiny of man in such a this-wordly and imperfect beatitude is to ruin the desire of man's nature by leaving it unfulfilled: *esset autem inane naturae desiderium si nunquam posset impleri*. Now that is impossible, and therefore we must say: *est igitur implebile desiderium naturale hominis*. But it is a fact that this natural desire is not totally fulfilled in this life. We must therefore say that this natural desire will be fulfilled in the future life. But again, what about Aristotle? As between recognizing the imperfections of human beatitude in this life and speaking of an *ultima felicitas*, where exactly does he stand?

Aristotle knew, says St. Thomas Aquinas, that there is no other kind of knowledge that man has in this life except according to the mode of the speculative sciences. So, because he knew this, he held that man reached, not a perfect felicity, but a merely human one. It is at this point that St. Thomas adds that famous expression of compassionate sympathy for Aristotle and his commentators. How their great minds suffered in the grip of error! There now follows the liberating message: We shall be freed from the suffering imposed by these errors, says St. Thomas Aquinas, if we hold, in accord with the proofs given above, that man can reach true happiness after this life; *since it is true* (he adds by way of recalling the essential point at issue) *that the soul of man is immortal*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Quia vero Aristoteles vidit quod non est alia cognitio hominis in hac vita quam per scientias speculativas, posuit hominem non consequi felicitatem perfectam, sed suo modo. In quo satis apparet quantam angustiam patiebantur hinc inde eorum praeclara ingenia . . ." ". . . a quibus angustiis liberabimur, si ponamus, secundum probationes praemissas, homines ad veram felicitatem post hanc vitam pervenire posse, *anima hominis immortalis existente*" [italics mine]. *Ibid.*

What is St. Thomas really saying? Does he really mean that Aristotle did not know or say anything about the immortality of the soul? Scarcely that. Ambiguous and obscure as the fifth chapter of the third book of the *De Anima* may be, it yet speaks of *separation, eternity* and *immortality* in connection with the human intellect. St. Thomas assuredly cannot be saying that there is no sense in which the intellectual soul of Aristotle knew or could claim immortality. He must therefore be denying, for Aristotle, the personal immortality of the soul in the name of the Aristotelian doctrine of the eternity and immortality of the intellect. After all, St. Thomas must be meaning to say not only that human beatitude is imperfect because it is limited to this life, but also that the individual man crowds into this imperfect beatitude all his personal expectations of eternity. St. Thomas must mean that Aristotle *did* intend to burden metaphysics with the task of being man's only heaven. He even says so.

Nothing in this life, he says, is so like the perfect and highest felicity of man as the life of those who contemplate the truth. Therefore, he concludes—and this is our second hurdle—that those philosophers who were unable to have a complete knowledge of the highest felicity of man *placed the highest felicity of man in that contemplation which is possible to man in this life*.<sup>15</sup> I repeat: this is not just metaphysics; it is the Aristotelian heaven. And St. Thomas knew it.

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<sup>15</sup> "Hujus autem perfectae et ultimae felicitatis in hac vita nihil est adeo simile sicut vita contemplantium veritatem, secundum quod est possibile in hac vita. Et ideo philosophi, qui de illa felicitate ultima plenam notitiam habere non potuerunt, in contemplatione quae est possibilis in hac vita ultimam felicitatem hominis posuerunt" [italics mine]. *Op. cit.*, III, 63.



# ART IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, 1540-1640

By JOHN U. NEF



## I

IN the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with the weakening of the medieval barrier between the "servile" and the "liberal" arts, explained so admirably by Professor Maritain in his *Art et Scolastique*, painting and eventually the plastic arts ceased to be regarded as "servile" occupations. They acquired an autonomy from the methods and discipline of the ordinary craftsman's shop. They also acquired some measure of autonomy from theology and Scholastic philosophy, as these had been transmitted by priests and others in forms that even the unlettered craftsman could readily comprehend.

In the Gothic age the methods and discipline of the craftsman's shop had extended to all work done with matter, including art. Art and craftsmanship had been inseparable. They had been profoundly influenced by religion, for the common religious worship of the age was hardly less essential to life than bread and drink. The subjects of the European sculptor, painter, and glazier had been determined in large measure by Scripture, theology, and philosophy, as philosophy had been rediscovered in the books of the wisest Greeks and Romans and incorporated into medieval thought. The spirit in which the sculptor, the painter, and the glazier approached and carried through their work was derived from the same sources as the subjects. Scripture, moral philosophy, and classical culture were written into the marvelous beauty of the churches, abbeys, and cathedrals of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. In the towns the citizens, together with peasants from near-by villages who brought their grain or poultry to market, saw statues of Homer, Aristotle, and Vergil alongside those of Christ, his disciples, the Virgin, and the saints of the Church.

Most of the scenes which filled the portals, formed the stained-glass windows, and embellished the outer and inner walls and the pillars, conveyed some moral lesson. It was difficult for a Christian to doubt that in the hereafter the wicked would suffer and the good would be rewarded. In the plastic arts, the form and the medium were determined mainly by the space and position in the cathedral or monastery that the work was designed to fill. Allegorical and distorted, rather than literal, renderings of the subject were suited best to such settings. They were best suited also to the abstract world of the mind, fostered by faith and by theology and philosophy.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages and at the time of the Reformation, the power of Scripture, theology, and philosophy over the subject, the spirit, and the form of works of art, diminished. In place of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Divine Comedy* and scores of lesser literary achievements inspired by the same forces of religious faith and philosophical universalism, we get stories about the individual man or woman, like those of Petrarch and Boccaccio. Profane subjects become more common in painting. In place of the great architectural scenes from the New Testament and from Church history of Cimabue and Giotto, we get the concert and the music lesson of Giorgione, the portraits of Titian, and the rich middle-class interiors of the brothers Van Eyck. Even though the painters of the Renaissance still frequently chose sacred subjects, they did not treat them with as deep a religious feeling as the painters of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries had revealed.

The character essential to a work of sacred art, as Maritain has remarked, is not determined primarily by its subject. It must have as its objective the instruction of the faithful; it must conform to the proprieties and regulations of liturgical usage as defined by the Church; it "must proceed from an inspiration which is not academic, nor formalist, nor archaic, nor sentimental, but truly and authentically religious."<sup>1</sup> Few paintings of early modern times with religious subjects are examples of

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Maritain, "Reflections on Sacred Art," in F. C. Lillie, *Examples of Religious Art*, Chicago, 1936.

sacred art in this sense. No religious painting of the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries brings the spectator so close to the Savior as Giotto's great picture of Christ appearing to St. Francis of Assisi, which once hung in the Louvre for all to see. St. Francis is pierced by the rays of the Divine Presence at just those parts of his body where Christ was wounded at the Crucifixion. The same scene is the subject of one of Dürer's woodcuts.<sup>2</sup> By his time it had become a conventional subject that artists used as an exercise. The woodcut is one of the least successful of all those that Dürer made. As the strength of religious inspiration behind artistic expression waned with "the waning of the Middle Ages," the churches and monasteries ceased to be the only important settings for artistic works. Paintings and statues, together with beautiful pieces in gold, silver, glass, and wood, came to be fashioned for town halls, palaces of justice, and for the private houses of nobles and even of financiers and merchants.

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries painting and sculpture, along with literature and music, were tending to become still more independent of Scripture, theology, and philosophy than they had been on the eve of the Reformation. The old distinction between poetry, as work of the mind, and painting, as work of the hands, was ceasing to be drawn, as the medieval barrier between the "servile" and the "liberal" arts was pierced at many more points. But painting, culture, and the plastic arts were now coming to be sharply differentiated from the labor of the ordinary manual workman, who made shoes or woolen cloth. The artist who manipulated matter was beginning to build a new kind of barrier between himself and the craftsman or technical expert, a barrier such as had not existed in the Middle Ages. At the same time the writer and the composer of music were building new kinds of barriers separating their arts from the other "liberal" arts. In the creative intellectual life of Western Europe an independent claim was being staked out for each of the arts, just as an in-

<sup>2</sup> Willi Kurth, *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer* (privately printed), n. d., p. 194.

dependent claim was to be staked out for each of the natural sciences. In place of one distinction in the realm of creative workmanship, the way was being prepared for many.

These tendencies away from universalism in the direction of modern specialization were not equally striking in all European countries. Between about 1540 and about 1640 the new tendencies toward individualism and artistic autonomy were much more pronounced in England than in France. In France there was an attempt, destined to bear rich fruit in the age of Louis XIV (1643-1715), to re-establish a harmony common to all the arts. The movement centered about the court. It was bound to the Church through the new French conception of the divine right of kings, and through the close relations of many courtiers with priests and ecclesiastical foundations. The differences between the development of art in France and in England at this time were important for the subsequent history of the creative life in both countries. What was the nature of the differences as they reveal themselves in architecture, the plastic arts, and particularly in the art of painting? To what extent and in what ways are these differences related to other contrasts between the histories of France and England during these hundred years?

## II

England achieved the position of leadership in industrial technology and the development of heavy industry, which she held until late in the nineteenth century, largely during this period. The period may be said to have begun with the dissolution of the monasteries, in 1536 and 1539, and to have ended with the outbreak of the civil war, in 1642. At the time of the Reformation the chief advances in heavy industry were accomplished in central Europe, Italy, Spain, and the strip of territory between the Alps and the Flemish coast, much of which passed from the possession of the Dukes of Burgundy to the direct control of the Hapsburgs. Until after the twenties and thirties of the sixteenth century, capitalist enterprise in most industries had made greater headway in all these countries and even in



France than in England. The period during which the industrial balance of power shifted most rapidly from the Continent to England began in the early seventies of the sixteenth century and lasted until the great depression in English cloth-making in the early twenties of the seventeenth. During this half-century an early industrial revolution took place. France did not participate in it as she was destined to participate to some extent in the world industrial revolution of modern times. Before the outbreak of the civil war, England had forged ahead of her, and of all Continental countries, in mining and metallurgy and practically all the heavy industries—in output per capita, in the use of machinery and large furnaces, and in the scale of enterprise controlled by private adventurers who were largely free from state interference. It was only in the artistic and the luxury industries that France maintained and increased the leadership over England which she had possessed throughout the Middle Ages.

All aspects of history, including the influence of the human mind upon events and upon the development of institutions and of the arts and sciences, are interrelated. Any attempt to tear out two segments from the complex historical pattern and treat their reciprocal interrelations is bound to be partial. When we consider together the contrasts in the progress of industry and of art in France and in England, and the connections between these contrasts, we have therefore to be on our guard. We have to remember that we are focusing attention on contrasts and neglecting resemblances. We have to remember that contrasts in industrial history do not *explain* contrasts in the history of the arts any more than contrasts in the latter *explain* those in the former. The purpose of considering these contrasts together is twofold. Such consideration contributes to an understanding of both. When combined with other comparative studies of French and English history,<sup>3</sup> it may contribute to the

<sup>3</sup> I mention the following essays of mine, not because they are at all adequate, but in order to indicate that I have attempted to make other comparisons besides those in this paper: "A Comparison of Industrial Growth in France and England, 1540-1640," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. XLIV [June, August, and October,

knowledge of the complex pattern of history. When combined with philosophy, such studies might conceivably help to guide mankind away from what has been towards what ought to be.

### III

The achievements of the English in literature in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were more glorious and universal than those of any other people. The achievements of the English in music during the early industrial revolution compare favorably with those of the French.<sup>4</sup> With painting and the plastic arts, it is different. Here we are in the only artistic realm where the work of the French from 1540 to 1640 overshadowed that of the English. Many persons have remembered the reigns of Francis I and his successors down to Louis XIII for the lovely harmony displayed in the chateaux along the Loire, in Berry, the Ile-de-France, and some other provinces, or for the fine public buildings and the private residences of wealthy traders and civil servants in towns like Rouen, Caen, Poitiers, Toulouse, or Dijon. Elizabethan manor houses, fine though they are, are less beautiful than castles like Azay-le-Rideau, Chambord, or Anet. Who would think of the town house of John Winchcomb, the cloth merchant, at Newbury, in which Henry VIII is said to have spent a night, as a satisfactory artistic equivalent for the Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde, at Rouen, or the Hôtel d'Escoville, at Caen, with their wonderfully ornamented courtyards and their perfectly proportioned rooms and doors and windows? Contemporary England had nothing that can be quite compared with the churches of Brou at Bourg-en-Bresse and of St. Michel at Dijon. She had nothing that can be

1936], pp. 289-317, 505-33, 643-66; "Prices and Industrial Capitalism in France and England, 1540-1640," *Economic History Review*, Vol. VII [1937], pp. 155-85; *Industry and Government in France and England, 1540-1640*, Philadelphia, 1940; "Industrial Europe at the Time of the Reformation," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. XLIX [February and April, 1941], pp. 1-40, 183-224; "War and Economic Progress, 1540-1640," *Economic History Review*, Vol. XI [1942].

<sup>4</sup> Considerations of space have made it necessary to leave literature and music out of this essay. I have given some thought to both, and hope eventually to publish the results of my studies.

quite compared with the sculpture of Jean Goujon and the artists of the Burgundian school. She had nothing that can be quite compared with the beautiful pages and bindings which came from the printing and publishing houses of the Estienne family, or with the ceramics composed in the humble shops of Bernard Palissy and his followers.

In France the sixteenth-century world of art fashioned with matter is a world of splendor and richness, which owes a great deal to the influence of Italian Renaissance models, and directly to the work of such artists as Leonardo da Vinci and Benvenuto Cellini, who left his trace on the beautiful entrance to the castle at Anet. Much of what is best belongs to the period before the religious wars (which made life difficult for the artist after 1560) and even to the period before the death of Francis I, in 1547. There was a decline in both the quantity and the quality of French architecture and of the products of the French plastic arts during the last half of the sixteenth century. Yet the Elizabethan age in England, where conditions were peaceful and tranquil compared with those on the Continent, produced in architecture, sculpture, or pottery nothing as fine as the products of the old French craft arts, which were dying out, or of the new French court arts, which were being born.

The artistic inferiority of English building to Continental was recognized by Englishmen of the early seventeenth century, some of whom aimed to instruct their countrymen in foreign methods. In 1624, when Sir Henry Wotton finally returned to England at the age of fifty-six, after many years of travel and diplomacy abroad, he published his *Elements of Architecture*. In the preface, he explained that he was "but a gatherer and disposer of other men's stuffe." As the contents show, the stuff was mainly Italian and French. The crudeness of English taste is a recurring theme. Wotton speaks, for example, of the principle laid down by the French architect, Philibert de l'Orme, that lime used in soldering should be made of the same stone employed in the work. "It must be confessed," Wotton writes, "that to make Lyme without any great

choyce, of refuse stuffe, as we commonly do, is an English error, of no small moment in our Buildings.”<sup>5</sup>

#### IV

During the Middle Ages, when France had been in almost all ways a more advanced country industrially than England, artistic craftsmanship was the principal objective of the workmen in a large number of industries. The French had excelled the English in almost all kinds of craftsmanship, in almost all work with the hands. The phenomenal industrial advance in England during the lifetime of Shakespeare was in coal mining, smelting, metal working, the manufacture of cheap cloth, the making of alum (for dyeing), soap (for scouring), and sheet glass, much of which went into the windows of ordinary houses, where it shielded men and women from the elements rather than stimulated their sense of beauty, like the glass of medieval and Renaissance churches. The emphasis of English workmanship was on the practical side. The English made knives to cut with, and cared less than the French about the ornamental effects of the handles. They made mirrors to look into, and were little concerned whether the borders enhanced the charm of the rooms where they hung. There was nothing in the early industrial revolution likely to lead the English to overtake the French as artistic craftsmen. The chief demands for manual laborers were at routine work on textiles and metal in stuffy cellars and garrets, and as wage hands in mines, at smelting furnaces, and in small factories producing alum, glass, soap, paper, sugar, and copperas. With the dissolution of the monasteries, the interest formerly taken by religious foundations in studios and workshops devoted to artistic craftsmanship ceased. The demand for the products of such studios and workshops declined.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile the artistic crafts seem to have maintained their prominent position in the chief French towns. This was cer-

<sup>5</sup> *Elements of Architecture*, London, 1624, preface.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. C. H. Collins Baker and G. W. Constable, *English Painters of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York, 1930.



tainly true of Paris. We have lists of various craftsmen who entered into contracts, often for marriage, under the jurisdiction of the Châtelet, the famous royal tribunal on the Ile de la Cité. The labor of most of them was of an artistic nature. When we compare the entries for the period 1588-1600 with those for the period 1637-1644, we find an increase in the proportion of all craftsmen who worked at the arts—painters, sculptors, embroiderers, goldsmiths, etc.<sup>7</sup> In all these arts, they excelled their English contemporaries, in spite of the great advances in industrial technology which were made in England.

Why was it that, at a time when England was assuming the leadership over all other European countries in industrial technology and in many branches of the natural sciences, the country showed no comparable achievements in the plastic arts? In the Middle Ages, when craftsmanship and artistry had been combined in the servile arts, industrial and artistic technique had been closely related to each other. Even during the Renaissance, when art was becoming more individualistic than it had been in the thirteenth century, some of the greatest artists—Leonardo and Dürer—were also important inventors. But in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries technical invention and artistic creation were ceasing to be closely associated, because the objectives of both were changing and were becoming less complementary. The inventor, above all in England, was more and more exclusively an engineer, bent on constructing better machinery, finding the force to drive it, discovering more efficient and powerful furnaces, devising cheaper means of lifting heavy weights and of moving commodities. The artist was concerned more exclusively than in the past with the actual piece of work on which he was engaged and less with the preparation for artistic ends of the basic materials that he used. The main object of the inventor, above all in England, was coming to be the production of consumable goods in greater quantities at cheaper prices in manual labor. A fundamental incompatibility was therefore arising between his

<sup>7</sup> *Archives Nationales*, MS. *Insinuations au Châtelet*, Vols. IV, VIII.

object and that of the artist, which was to fashion beautiful things to delight the senses and instruct the mind. A true work of art must be unique. If it is recognized for what it is, it may obtain a great permanence. The tool, the machine, or the furnace, with which English inventors were coming to be almost exclusively concerned, is made to be repeated, and to be replaced by one more efficient.

These differences in objectives have a great influence on form and method. In the case of the artist, form and method are determined mainly by considerations of beauty and instruction in the single object created. In the case of the inventor, they are determined mainly by considerations of serviceability and cheapness in the multiple objects to be produced by means of tools, machinery, furnaces, and other technical devices, or by considerations of efficiency and speed in the conveyances for transport. Such a division between objectives, separating artistic from industrial technique, had always existed to some extent. But the early industrial revolution made it sharp for the first time in Western history. Industrial technology was ceasing, especially in England, to be the consistent ally of art. The growing division between the technique of art and the technique of industry was destined in modern times to make the aims of art and the aims of manufacturing ever more difficult to reconcile.

In France the changes in the objectives of technology were taking place much more slowly than in England. French inventors sought to solve mechanical problems by the application of mathematical and particularly geometrical principles, at a time when France excelled all other countries in the originality of its mathematical thought. As some famous lines of Pascal's should remind us,<sup>8</sup> the mathematical mind is inadequate to the creation of very great art. But it can contribute to art far more readily than the engineering mind bent mainly on the application of power, the increase in size, and the growth in efficiency measured in costs of production. Pure mathematics emphasizes

<sup>8</sup> The reference is to the distinction between the geometrical and the intuitive mind at the beginning of *Les Pensées*.

elegance, balance, and proportion—all of which formed an essential part of the rules of French classical art as they were worked out in the seventeenth century. Technical improvements in French industry in the time of Henri IV and Louis XIII were still designed more frequently to contribute to beauty than to increase output, to produce fine wares rather than wares which were simply serviceable. French industrial technology did not yet seriously get in the way of artistic craftsmanship. This helps us to understand the superiority of the French over the English in the beauty of architecture and of the products of the plastic arts.

## V

These contrasts between the development of industrial technology in the two countries are not quite as helpful in explaining the superiority of the French over the English in painting between 1540 and 1640. In sixteenth-century Europe painting was ceasing to be a craft. It was becoming a fine art. Like the work of the poet and the prose writer, that of the painter was acquiring a self-sufficiency which it had not possessed in the Middle Ages. While the pictures of Giotto had almost always been planned, like the statues and stained-glass windows of his time, as parts of a larger composition, such as a monastery or a church, the pictures of sixteenth-century painters were frequently hung wherever the patron or purchaser found it suitable to place them. Many of them were painted without relation to any particular setting. The painter's task was increasingly limited by the space between the four sides of his canvas. His work ended when he had created with his subject matter a harmony of color and design within that space. Within that space his work was becoming freer and more complex than that of the medieval master. He was much less limited with respect both to subject matter and to form. The age of individualism and materialism, in the sense of more literal, more concrete treatment of the subject, was dawning in painting as well as in literature.

The hundred years from 1540 to 1640 were perhaps as great a

period in European painting as in European poetry and letters. Yet Englishmen, who played a dominant part in the great literature, played virtually no part in the great painting. Their place was taken by the Spaniards, the Flemish, and above all the Dutch. The position of Rembrandt in the history of painting resembles that of Shakespeare in the history of literature. We have in Rembrandt the whole world of painting just as we have in Dante or in Shakespeare the whole world of poetry and drama. If Western painting could be represented only by its greatest painter, the choice of Rembrandt would be almost inevitable. The only other possible choice would be Giotto. In Rembrandt's greatest pictures, works like the "Christ at Emmaüs" or "The Good Samaritan," he created scenes made up of elements that no other painter has ever combined with the same intensity, the same power to move the spectator, to remain in his memory and light his way through life. If we consider Rembrandt's paintings and etchings and drawings together, we find there all the force of satire that was to distinguish Hogarth and Daumier at their best; a substance in the painting itself no less moving than that in the best Titians, Tintoretts, and Cézannes; a beauty of line that is no less perfect than that of Leonardo or Ingres; a power of composition with respect to the arrangement of the subject and the juxtaposition of colors equal to that of Giorgione, yet so different in conception, so mysterious and profound, that the comparison can hardly be made. Above all these qualities, there is embedded in Rembrandt's painting a sense of humanity, a sympathy with and understanding of the depths of human suffering that are lacking from the work of any other painter since the Renaissance. They are established through a religious feeling only less compelling than that of Giotto.

As in the case of Shakespeare, the unique master was surrounded by many other artists of very great talent and by a few of genius. The freedom from traditional restrictions and the remarkable increase in the national wealth at the beginning of the seventeenth century were conditions that Holland alone among Continental countries shared with England. These con-



ditions were hardly less important for the great flowering of the new, more individualistic painting than for the flowering of the new, more individualistic literature. But the English did not possess another condition indispensable for success in painting—a remarkable aptitude for subtle work with the hands and for the mixing and arranging of matter to produce artistic effects. In the case of the Elizabethans the need for expression felt by a people in the midst of momentous changes went almost entirely into literature. Painting cannot be an accompaniment to poetry as music can; so there was less in the Elizabethan age to produce a distinguished school of painting than there was to produce a distinguished school of music. Englishmen managed to paint portraits which give us an excellent impression of some of the chief figures of the age; but these portraits are not memorable as art. No Englishman born between 1500 and 1615 became a painter of renown, and English painting, unlike English music, had no influence on Continental art. In fact nearly all the Englishmen who painted the portraits that have come down to us had names that suggest they were of Flemish or Dutch origin. Great artists like Holbein and Van Dyke were encouraged to visit England partly because of the lack there of native talent. They did not come, as some musical composers came, to learn from English artists—to draw inspiration from the ruggedness, the freshness, the inventiveness, and the force characteristic of English art. Foreign painters who came to England, and Holbein in particular, made their mark on English painting, but when they left the country they took away nothing they had learned from English artists.<sup>9</sup>

## VI

French painting was superior to English, as it has been in every century before and since, but the hundred years following 1540 cannot be regarded as one of its brilliant periods. Until the very end of this period France produced no painter whose work even approaches in beauty the works of contemporary

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Baker and Constable, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

foreign masters such as Veronese, Tintoretto, Greco, Velasquez, Rubens, Van Dyke, Hals, or Peter Breughel the elder, to say nothing of Rembrandt. In French painting, as in French literature and French music, one era ended during these hundred years and another began, and there was a wide gap between the two eras, at the very time when English art realized in literature and in music its greatest possibilities. We had in France, first, an old art of the later Middle Ages that was declining, then the beginnings of the new "classical" art of the age of Louis XIV, without the full-bodied masterpieces of either art. The greatest French painters were François Clouet, who was born in 1522 and died in 1572, the third of a famous family of artists of Flemish origin, and Poussin and Claude Lorrain, who were born in 1594 and 1600, respectively. The work of Poussin and Claude, like the work of Corneille in literature, belongs more properly to the reign of Louis XIV. Both of them spent their younger, formative years in Italy, and it was not until 1640 that they were called back by Richelieu to become court painters. So we do not include their work in this essay.

The French humanism of the Renaissance had an influence on the painting of Clouet and his contemporaries, just as it had on the poetry of Ronsard and the music of Le Jeune. Sometimes the work of the humanist painters is erudite. It consists in pictures of Roman scenes, with temples, obelisks, fountains, and warriors in plumed helmets. Sometimes these painters give us the pictures of famous courtiers. The portraits of François Clouet always show a skill in composition and a vitality that marks them off from the numerous portraits by artists of the last three decades of the sixteenth century whose names are forgotten but whose works still clutter up the walls of some French provincial museums. But compared with the wonderful fifteenth-century work of Fouquet and the Maître de Moulins, the best paintings of Clouet are not memorable. After his death, in 1572, no French painter of even moderate distinction in the history of art was born until 1589, when Henri IV had ascended the throne. Apart from the work in pencil and charcoal of competent draughtsmen such as the Dumonstiers, the

best things we have between 1570 and 1615, when painters of the new school reached manhood, are unpretentious attempts to reproduce famous scenes like Admiral Coligny's siege of Poitiers, or to portray Henri IV, his principal ministers, and the ladies of the court. These pictures are valuable as historical documents rather than as art. They are not superior to the work of contemporary English portrait painters. In the entire history of French painting during modern times there has been no other period anything like as barren as the forty-five years from 1570 to 1615.

Painting in France was still attached to the crafts. It was a servile art. It had not broken away from simple craftsmanship nearly as effectively as in Italy, Spain, southern Germany, and the Low Countries. Much craft art was dying in Europe in the sixteenth century. By 1550 it was becoming plain that neither the sculpture nor the painted glass of the late medieval crafts had any future. In France the tendency towards individualism was weaker than in England or Holland. The tradition in art was still the craftsman tradition. Master craftsmen were called on to supply works of art, much as they were called on to supply ornamental locks and keys or iron railings, and no line was drawn between the arts and crafts. The specifications of the purchaser were generally detailed. We have, for example, an order given in 1639 to a master embroiderer of Nîmes by an architect, who was apparently restoring the church and convent for the Sisterhood of Notre Dame de Pitié in the little town of Apt, about thirty-five miles east of Avignon. T. Bonnier, the master embroiderer, was asked to embroider in satin, silk, gold, and silver thread on one side of a banner of blue damask, seven feet by three, a figure of Notre Dame de Pitié with Christ on her knees, with an angel on either side and the cross in the middle. Maître Bonnier, who was to receive seventy-five francs for the work, was to be furnished with a design. Only the embellishment was to be left to his discretion.<sup>10</sup>

This kind of order left the artist, as Maître Bonnier was called

<sup>10</sup> *Inventaire des Archives départementales du Gard*, series E, Vol. II, 453.

in the contract, little initiative. Painting in Europe had become too autonomous an art to flourish under such a system. If painting was to be successful, the emphasis could no longer be placed on the function which the artistic work was to perform in relation to some larger scheme; the emphasis had to be placed on the work itself. Painting in France could not revive if it remained a craft. It had to become an art like poetry or music. It was likely to remain a craft unless it received the support of the all-powerful court, for there were in early seventeenth-century France hardly any groups of private merchants enthusiastic about art, like the new rich in England who participated in poetry and music, and supplied an audience for the dramatist and the composer. In France there were fewer openings for making private fortunes. Wealthy merchants, who had risen from humble origins, were generally drawn into the service of the crown.

## VII

A change took place in the quality of French painting and in the position of the French painter when the generation born during the reign of Henri IV, between 1589 and 1610, grew up. This reign gave France a number of painters whose work is still thought worthy of exhibiting as art. Besides Poussin and Claude, Georges de la Tour, Philippe de Champagne, Simon Vouet, the three Le Nain brothers, and Le Valentin were all born between 1589 and 1610.<sup>11</sup> All of them, except Poussin and Claude, were at work in France during the greater part of Louis XIII's reign, which ended in 1643. Under Louis XIII painting was ceasing to be nourished by the old crafts and was coming to derive its support from new painters' guilds, and from the National Academy of Painting founded in 1636. Like literature and music, painting was fostered by the court, which was helping to control and regulate every form of work, and creative work in particular.

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that the eldest of the Le Nains, Antoine, was born in 1588. Scholars have not yet succeeded in fixing dates for the births of the two older brothers. The youngest, Mathieu, was born in 1607.



Among artists and critics opinions differ concerning the creative powers of the painters of Louis XIII's reign, but no impartial judge thinks of this as one of the great periods in French art, in the sense that the age of Poussin and Claude, or that of Watteau and Fragonard, or that of Ingres and Delacroix, or that of Cézanne and Renoir were great periods. The verdict of the late Roger Fry on the French painters of the early seventeenth century is too harsh. In commenting upon the resurrection by picture dealers and collectors of the Le Nain brothers, whose work was almost entirely forgotten during the eighteenth and a part of the nineteenth century, Fry asked himself where their pictures would rank if compared with those of their contemporaries of the Dutch school. "They would come," he answered, "so far below the Potts, Leduqs, and Sweets that we should never bother our heads about them. It is probable that before very long they will go back to their place among the journeymen artists." We may grant that Fry's comment was the product of a slight ill temper over the misguided attempt of some incompetent critics to claim that the Le Nains were great artists. At its best their work often has a charm which Fry ignored. The outdoor scenes of Louis Le Nain in particular are pleasing; they are reminiscent of the realism of Caravaggio (1569-1609). Some critics feel that they contain a promise of the harmony that Corot sometimes achieved so perfectly in his landscapes. In the same way, some pictures of Antoine Le Nain, such as "Les petits chanteurs" or "Les petits joueurs de cartes," may be said to contain a faint promise of the eighteenth-century grace of Fragonard. But there is no Le Nain that is nearly as fine as a good Corot or a good Fragonard.

The pictures of all the Le Nains are less serious, both in subject matter and as works of art, than the pictures of Georges de La Tour (1593-1652) and Philippe de Champagne (1602-74), who was born in the Brussels where Rubens was busy with his vast and varied and mighty art. The best paintings of Champagne and La Tour are arresting. La Tour's "La Madeleine repentente" shows a very deep religious feeling, a feeling of

intensity similar to that which characterized the life of Mère Angélique, who did so much to establish the great ascetic tradition of the Jansenist Abbey of Port-Royal. There is a similar sense of the deep meaning of religious experience in the best portraits of Philippe de Champagne, such as his painting of the same Mère Angélique or of Monsieur de Saint-Cyran, whose influence at Port-Royal was almost as strong as hers. La Tour's "The Sharper," once in the possession of Monsieur Landry of Paris, is an extraordinarily lifelike impression of a scene at a card table. Yet none of these works are creations of very great artists. What holds our attention in the portraits of Philippe de Champagne is the character of his models more than anything he has put into them. What holds our attention in the pictures of La Tour, and more especially in the famous painting of his lesser contemporary Le Valentin, the "Boy Cheating at Cards" in the Dresden gallery, is mainly the drama of the scene itself, faithfully portrayed, rather than what the painter has created from the scene. Except in the best canvases of La Tour and Philippe de Champagne we have not mounted very many steps from the anonymous picture of Admiral Coligny's siege of Poitiers. Any French painting of the early seventeenth century seems lacking in warmth and feeling, and above all in depth and humanity, when it is put beside a masterpiece of the contemporary Dutch school.

More important than any results obtained by the French painters of Louis XIII's reign was the influence which these painters exercised upon the future of French painting. They were establishing rules for their art which were to serve their successors much as the rules for the arts of poetry and music, formulated at about the same time, were to serve later French poets and musicians. Neither Philippe de Champagne nor La Tour, the best artists of the reign, was the leader in this regulative movement. La Tour's work had little influence on his contemporaries and it was almost entirely neglected in the study of French painting until our own time. Simon Vouet (1590-1649), a painter who achieved less satisfactory results than either Champagne or La Tour, came nearer to occupying the

place in painting occupied by Malherbe in poetry and Guez de Balzac in prose, as founders of classical French style. Vouet was one of the greatest teachers of painting in French history. Americans can gain an idea of what he taught when they visit Thomas Jefferson's home on the high hill at Monticello, for Vouet's work, unlike that of the Le Nains, was well known in Jefferson's time. He brought back from France one of Vouet's best paintings, "The Daughter of Herodias with the Head of John the Baptist." In its dignity and classical draughtsmanship, the picture anticipates Poussin. It has an elegance of form, because of the orderly arrangement of its subject matter, that is lacking in the paintings of all the Le Nains, which are rougher and more spontaneous. Anyone at all familiar with painting can immediately recognize Vouet's remarkable competence, though it requires a greater sensibility and a longer study to appreciate the qualities of La Tour. Vouet's pictures have an elegance that we miss in the work of the Le Nains, and even in that of La Tour or Philippe de Champagne. But like the poems of Malherbe and the letters of Balzac, which show a similar technical perfection, they lack the essential elements of all very great art—a knowledge of the depths of human suffering, combined with vitality, wit, and creative imagination.

Vouet seems to have had an incomparable gift for conveying the technical principles he worked out to the younger painters who studied in his studio. One of his pupils was Le Brun, who became the master authority on painting and the arts of design under Louis XIV, and who transmitted what he had learned from Vouet to most of the artists of his generation. Le Brun helped to found the Academy of Painting. Colbert made him the director of the Gobelins works and he set about to teach scores of apprentices to apply intelligently the principles of artistic workmanship he had acquired to all the industrial arts, now patronized by the court.

The new artistic tradition, cultivated in the time of Louis XIII about the court, was enriched by contact with Italy. Italian art was infused into French painting especially in the works of Claude and Poussin. The tradition was enriched by

contact with Flanders, especially through Philippe de Champaigne, who settled in Paris as a court painter. His relations with Port-Royal were also important. They helped to bring to painting the high sense of moral discipline which became so prominent an element in all French art under Louis XIV. At the same time the emphasis on form and logic, derived partly from Descartes and other French mathematicians, appeared above all in Vouet and later in Poussin, and gave a new, if somewhat rigid, harmony to painting.

The appeal of the new French painting of the period from 1615 to 1640, with its rigid form, its order, its morality, was primarily to the intellect. Feeling and imagination were subordinated to reason and proportion. At the very time when the English artist, like the English philosopher, was drawing closer to the material world about him, the French artist was withdrawing into the world of his mind, which, according to Descartes, was a world independent of matter and sensation. The old craft art was being replaced by a new and more autonomous art, unified and supported by the French court, and subject, like literature, to reason. One of Poussin's greatest achievements, according to Delacroix, was to break away from "those affected schools in which the craft side of art was preferred to the intellectual side."<sup>12</sup>

## VIII

If we look at the century from 1540 to 1640, and more especially at the fifty years from 1570 to 1620, through the spectacles of nineteenth-century Anglo-Saxon political economy, and with the new knowledge provided by the recent study of economic history, we are arrested by the contrast between English prosperity and French poverty. It may be doubted whether the volume of production in France was appreciably greater in 1620, after three decades of relatively peaceful conditions, than it had been on the eve of the religious wars, which began in

<sup>12</sup> Quoted André Gide, "A Few Reflections on the Disappearance of the Subject in Sculpture and Painting," in *Verve*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1937), p. 9.



1560. The material standard of living among the French wage earners apparently fell a great deal in most provinces during the last forty years of the sixteenth century, and there was no striking increase in the wealth or income of other classes to compensate for this fall. Meanwhile, in England, a phenomenal expansion in industrial production began in the seventies of the sixteenth century. Within a generation the output of industrial commodities, such as coal, metal, salt, paper, glass, and soap increased several fold. The standard of living among members of the middle class—shopkeepers, traders, and money lenders—rose very rapidly. The gentry, most of them of mercantile origin, who were skilful in exploiting the resources of their country estates, gained almost as much as the town businessmen. Such farmers as held their land on secure freehold tenure at fixed rents also greatly increased their wealth. Even wage earners seem to have managed to maintain their standard of living during the half century preceding the civil war, in spite of a very rapid rise in prices.<sup>13</sup>

An increase in the material wealth of a nation and in the income of its people is a tremendous achievement. It is always the product of great human ingenuity and enterprise, and it has often been accompanied by a flowering of the human mind. The mistake which learning in the Anglo-Saxon countries has frequently made is to assume that any improvement in the material welfare of a nation contributes almost inevitably to all the ultimate wordly values—to virtue, truth, and beauty. The mistake Anglo-Saxon learning has frequently made is to assume that the arsenals of scholarship and education can be devoted almost exclusively to improvement in the production and the distribution of measurable material wealth and to the improvement of health, without any loss to values which lie beyond the range of positive science. These mistakes are exem-

<sup>13</sup> Nef, "Prices and Industrial Capitalism in France and England, 1540-1640," *Economic History Review*, Vol. VII, no. 2 (1937), p. 173. For evidence in support of other statements in this paragraph, the reader is referred to other essays of mine, cited above, fn. 3. See also R. H. Tawney, "The Rise of the Gentry, 1558-1640," *Economic History Review*, Vol. XI (1941), pp. 1-38.

plified in some remarks of Burke's, to whom an important essay in this volume is devoted. "Why should the expenditure of a great landed property, which is a dispersion of the surplus product of the soil, appear intolerable to you or to me," wrote Burke in 1790, "when it takes its course through the accumulation of vast libraries, which are the history of the force and weakness of the human mind; through great collections of ancient records, medals, and coins, which attest and explain laws and customs; through paintings and statues, that, by imitating nature, seem to extend the limits of creation; through grand monuments of the dead, which continue the regards and connexions of life beyond the grave; through collections of the specimens of nature, which become a representative assembly of all the classes and families of the world, that by disposition facilitate, and, by exciting curiosity, open the avenues to science?"<sup>14</sup>

The early English industrial revolution did not interfere with the cultivation of the ultimate values of human life to anything like the same extent as the vastly more comprehensive industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, under the sheer weight of which the world seems to be reeling in our time.<sup>15</sup> In the kingdom of the arts, the early industrial revolution was accompanied by the greatest creative movement in the whole history of English literature. But it would be a mistake to assume that great periods of material advance and of artistic eminence inevitably go hand in hand.<sup>16</sup> What made the Elizabethan age unique in the history of English literature was not the prosperity by itself (there have been other even more pros-

<sup>14</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, *Burke's Works*, Vol. V (London, 1803), p. 292; a reference for which I am indebted to Dr. Hutchins.

<sup>15</sup> As I attempted to point out in a paper entitled "The Industrial Revolution Reconsidered," read at the third Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, held in New York City, August 30, 1942. As I suggested in that paper, the industrial revolution actually got under way rather later than is commonly supposed, not until 1784-85. Burke wrote his *Reflections* at just the time when phenomenally rapid economic changes had begun, and some of his words in this and in other documents seem to reflect the changes.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. my *The United States and Civilization*, Chicago, 1942, pp. 236-44.

perous periods) but the momentous issues that were raised in men's minds by changes of all kinds (of which economic progress was only one) concerning the nature and objectives of human existence. In the dogmatic philosophy of the later Middle Ages, material improvement and the scientific investigations likely to contribute to it were not given an adequate place. The break away from that philosophy and the new emphasis on material values, which the early industrial revolution encouraged, were not likely to interfere with the arts to the same extent as a similar emphasis in recent times, when material improvement is over-valued by learning. At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England was of all countries the one in which the problems of human life and human knowledge struck men most vividly and most intensely. There were a variety of reasons for that. Peace and prosperity were among them, because they offered men security and leisure, which were lacking in France during the decades of religious wars. The tremendous changes in the worldly horizons open to men's minds were also among the reasons for the flowering of drama and poetry, music and prose. The industrial changes were not the chief changes, nor were they the basic ones, in the sense that they caused all the others. Like the secret of life itself, the ultimate explanation of beauty must always elude us. Beauty is not subject to explanation by scientific laws. All the historian can supply is a true, unbiased description of the setting in which great art appears—a description which derives its significance from the relations it reveals between the setting and the art.

All the changes of the Elizabethan age, including the voyages of discovery and England's emergence as a great power in European political history after the Armada, were related in varying degrees to the industrial changes. The emergence of the "new," more materialistic, philosophy, the rise of experimental science, the growing influence of the Puritans, the increasing interest in parliamentary government, were promoted to some extent by the rise of the mercantile class and the gentry,

brought about in part by the early industrial revolution. That revolution has not yet been given the place in the general history of England which it occupies. But it would be artificial to regard it as the primary force in English history in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It was itself the product of many other historical changes. The effect of all these changes, interacting upon each other, was to raise in a new and sharp form a host of vital recurring questions concerning man's existence, and to impress upon sensitive men the imperative need for an attempt to answer them.

It has been suggested by Professor J. L. Lowes that one of the chief differences between the English and the French minds is the belief of the English in the possibility of reopening the deal with fate. Never have conditions in England so encouraged the reopening of the deal as at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The chief motive power behind Elizabethan art was the need for expressing, in new and imperishable ways, great truths concerning human existence. Since the content was of more importance than the form, the Elizabethans chose first the most direct means of expression, and this was language, and second music, as an accompaniment to language.

If the rise of industrialism at this time did nothing immediately to interfere with the cause of art, in the form of literature and even of music, the same thing cannot be said about painting and the other arts that have concerned us in this essay. For these the subordination of the physical substances used to artistic ends and the skilful employment of hand labor and imaginative technique in the cause of beauty, were indispensable. Peace and prosperity were providing security and leisure in England for industrial development, as well as for the composition of fine prose, poetry, and music. But English economic conditions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—the pressing need for pumping water and raising coal and ore from deep mines, for draining the fens, for dredging harbors, for carrying bulky goods more cheaply by land and water, and for inventing larger and more efficient furnaces to make possible the substitution in manufacture of coal, which was abundant,



for wood, which was growing scarce—all these circumstances pushed the English technician and financial adventurer toward the discovery and development of machinery and other practical devices designed to increase the volume and diminish the labor costs of production. These stimuli all turned English ingenuity and skill towards quantity and serviceability rather than towards quality and artistic splendor. The kind of industrial development that was taking place in England—in the direction of power-driven machinery, large furnaces, and routine methods of production—canalized manual dexterity and knowledge in channels that had little or no connection with the aesthetic problems of painting and the plastic arts and did more to interfere with than to encourage true art.

France largely escaped this kind of industrial development. That was partly because she had as yet almost no deep mines and because she had in most provinces plenty of wood; partly because there was no growth in population such as was taking place in England, and no great pressure upon land and other natural resources, including forests; partly because there was no transfer of property from ecclesiastical to lay hands like that brought about by the dissolution of the English monasteries and the reduction in the number of the clergy. The old traditions of skilled artistic work with the hands, cultivated during the Middle Ages, had been much more firmly established in France than in England before the Reformation. The century which followed was far less damaging on the industrial side in France than in England to the persistence of such traditions and to their revival in the arts surrounding the court. The love of the French mind for abstract reasoning and for the order and proportion associated with mathematics had contrasted with the interest of the English mind in the study of matter even as early as the time of Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon. The contrasts between the economic development of the two countries during the century from 1540 to 1640 increased these differences to the advantage of painting and the plastic arts in France. It was to some extent because she did not participate in the early industrial revolution that France increased the leader-

ship in the luxury and artistic industries which she had always held over England. That revolution helps us to understand the inferior position of England compared with the Continent in painting and the plastic arts throughout modern times.

There was another way in which the early industrial revolution imposed a less immediate, but ultimately a more general, handicap upon the cause of beauty. The movement towards reality and worldly romance which took place in Elizabethan England was precious for Western art, because it provided fresh content and awakened great new hopes for mankind here on earth. Yet this movement, which is associated with the rise of industrialism as well as with the discoveries, contained elements of danger for Western art. The arts cannot do without form and principles, any more than they can do without content and imagination. When great emphasis is laid upon content and imagination there is a danger that principles and form will suffer. That was a danger against which French history from 1540 to 1640 provided a bulwark. The rules and principles worked out for poetry, prose, music, and painting in early seventeenth-century France did not lead to the production of many inspiring works of art before the accession of Louis XIV in 1643. Nor did they open the way for the French artist ever to attain to what Mr. Roger Hinks has called "the grandest manner of all"—the manner of Shakespeare and Dante, Rembrandt and Giotto, Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. But the establishment of French classicism, with its emphasis on order, balance, and proportion, has given France a longer and more continuous artistic history in the grand manner—the manner of Racine, Molière, and Stendhal, the manner of Couperin, Rameau, and Berlioz, the manner of Poussin, Ingres, and Cézanne—than any other Western country. The establishment of general artistic rules and principles, depending on the subtlety of the free mind independent of the methods of modern natural science and technology, combined with widespread training in artistic craftsmanship in the use of matter, to make art a more intimate part of life in France than in other nations in modern times. Frenchmen find art in the things they make,

in the thoughts they construct, in the sentences they speak. More than any other Western people, the French have dwelt with beauty.

Great art is something more than an ornament to civilization. It embodies what is best in the experience of a people, puts it in a universal and a beautiful form. Civilization cannot survive without art—without the conditions which make art possible—any more than without philosophy. The historian would do well not to commiserate with France for its failure to participate in the early industrial revolution before counting the costs as well as the profits of industrialism. One of the costs is likely to be beauty.

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# JOHN DEWEY AND MODERN THOMISM:

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

By WILLIAM O'MEARA



THE philosophy of John Dewey may be studied from many different points of view and if properly approached much profit is to be gained. In the present paper, I should like to offer an interpretation of some of Dewey's important teachings. On the basis of his leading conception, that of experience, as he chooses to term it, Dewey presents an estimate of classical philosophy and of contemporary philosophy which adheres to the classical tradition. I shall first explain his criticism of the leading schools of philosophy of the older type. In the second part, his teachings concerning "experience" will be interpreted. Finally, some suggestions will be made concerning the relevance of Dewey's thought for the contemporary philosopher in the Thomist tradition.

Professor Dewey's philosophy has been the object of widely varying estimates and interpretations. Outside the circle of his professed disciples, his views have not been, in general, either adequately understood or very favorably received. The preponderant influence of Dewey has been among educationists, with many of whom, it may be surmised, enthusiasm has frequently been more prominent than understanding. At all events, the difficulty of understanding Dewey's contribution to philosophy, however extreme, is a commonly found factor whenever a new idea is offered for consideration. The usual sequence of events on such occasions has been analysed by Dewey himself in his "introductory word" to Sidney Hook's *The Metaphysics of Pragmatism*.<sup>1</sup> The only remedy for those who would understand before they comment and criticise is more diligent

<sup>1</sup> Chicago: Open Court, 1927.



and objective study of the philosopher's writings. This, of course, may be aided by interpretative and comparative studies of Dewey's leading ideas. It is my aim in the present paper to attempt such a study, which however brief it must be, may prove helpful to those who recognize the indispensability of understanding the doctrines of major philosophers as a prerequisite to fruitful philosophical work.

## I

According to Professor Dewey, that which most importantly and significantly distinguishes the new from the old in philosophy is the abandonment on the part of the former of all belief in any Absolute Reality or in "absolutes" in being. The acceptance of the reality of the Absolute or of "absolutes" in being has lead, historically, to a division of being or "the world" into the Real and the Apparent. This division Dewey finds to be characteristic of all philosophies of the older type.<sup>2</sup> In some of them there is a higher level of existence, a really real world, wherein perfection, immutability, security, absolute truth, and fixed essences obtain. It is with this realm that philosophy, the ultimate in knowledge, is alone competent to deal. Set in invidious contrast with this realm is a lower and less noble one: the ordinary workaday world of common experience, the characteristics of which are mutability, chance, and insecurity. From this division follows the familiar exaltation of *a priori* and immutable verities, the product of pure reason, at the expense of the ordinary perfectible truths of experience discovered by common sense and elaborated in the always approximate and perfectible teachings of the sciences.

Among philosophies of the classical type, we may select for our present purpose three varieties, in order to explain Dewey's position. The first is the sort just mentioned: those which have explicitly developed and held such a notion of two realms or levels of existence, distinguished as Dewey describes them.

<sup>2</sup> *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920, pp. 22-3.

They are monistic philosophies in the rationalistic-intellectualistic tradition, including the great pantheisms. With gradations in emphasis, we find this view among most philosophers usually called rationalists; in modern times, I think it would be correct to say, all rationalists have held such a dualistic opinion. Naturally, because of the greater development of epistemological considerations in modern philosophy, this standpoint is most obvious so far as concerns the nature of knowledge. From Descartes to the most contemporary idealist is found this characteristic distinction between *a priori*, rational, and certain knowledge, and *a posteriori*, empirical, and probable opinion. This distinction, as it did in ancient philosophy, leads to a coordinate distinction between the objects of the two types of cognition and a consequent partition of reality into the world of the really real and the world of appearance. This variety of what Dewey calls organic metaphysics is typically exemplified in the notion of an all-inclusive "Absolute" as held by post-Kantian idealists such as Hegel, Green, Bradley, and Royce. Even this summary account should be sufficient to make clear the bearing of Dewey's judgment in so far as it concerns this one sort of classical philosophy.

The second kind to be considered is, on this view, essentially a sub-type of monistic-organic metaphysics. It is the doctrine of traditional scholastic theism. For Dewey, this doctrine, has, of course, even less plausibility than more obviously monistic teachings. In the face of a transcendent deity, described as infinite, immutable, all-perfect, etc., the everyday world of ordinary experience cannot but be mere appearance, more or less ingeniously explained away, according to Dewey. Such a doctrine does not have much standing even among *philosophies* of the classic type; most modern philosophers would exclude it from consideration because it is regarded as involving supernatural or theological prepossessions in no way amenable to criticism of a properly philosophical kind. Theism is a variant of organic metaphysics which Dewey would reject *a fortiori* because of his rejection of the *genus*.

Thus far the application of Dewey's conclusion as to the falsity of all conceptions holding to an "Absolute" with their corollary division of the world into two levels of existence is fairly obvious. What is more striking is its application to what he terms atomic metaphysics. This philosophy is exemplified by atomists and mechanists in ancient and modern times as well as by the various kinds of empiricists, realists and materialists in modern times. Although these philosophers are opposed to the conception of the "Absolute" taught by monistic thinkers, according to Dewey they regard physical atoms, sense-data, "neutral particulars," or some such simple existents as absolute and really real. It is in terms of these inherently unchanging existents that the atomist and empiricist explains or perhaps explains away the ordinary macroscopic things and organisms of experience. This view, professing empiricism, is in fact, not genuinely empiricist at all, according to Dewey, and for this reason he finds it necessary to use the term "experimental empiricism"<sup>3</sup> to signify his own doctrine on experience.

All forms of classical philosophy, then, in Dewey's opinion are outmoded and to be rejected. Monists and pluralists, empiricists and rationalists, all alike, have failed to read the lesson of experience aright. For reasons which Dewey has explained at length in many of his works, all philosophers of the past and those contemporaries who still uphold the ancient tradition have gravely misconceived the nature of reality. They have sought to find, among existent things or in existence, something fixed, perfect, secure. But in truth in existence there is nothing with such qualities. There is no existence which is immutable. Hence, the God of the theist, the God of the pantheist, Plato's world of ideas, the species of Aristotle, the atom of Democritus and his modern followers, the Absolute of the nineteenth century idealists—to all alike must be denied existence. "A thing 'absolutely' stable and unchangeable would be out of the range of the principle of action and reaction, of resistance and leverage

<sup>3</sup> *The Quest for Certainty*, New York, 1929, p. 112.

as well as of friction." "Every existence is an event."<sup>4</sup> The new and genuinely experimental empiricism teaches these important lessons.

## II

Dewey's leading conception, in virtue of which he has reached these conclusions is a theory on the nature of experience. The meaning of this conception has apparently been extremely difficult for Dewey's critics to grasp. This is made clear in his rejoinder to the arguments of Santayana, Bertrand Russell, A. E. Murphy, and others, in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*.<sup>5</sup> The student may be grateful, however, to Messrs. Santayana, Russell and Murphy, because the reply their adverse criticisms called forth constitutes a paper of major importance for the understanding of Dewey's thought. It is especially beneficial in calling attention to important texts in earlier works. In view of the difficulty and importance of Dewey's notion of experience it is in order to attempt a statement in interpretation here.

Perhaps the most important point in Dewey's theory—certainly the one most frequently misunderstood—is that experience is not primarily an affair of cognition. "Consciousness . . . is only a very small and shifting portion of experience. In the experience . . . are all the physical features of the environment, extending out in space . . . and . . . time, and the habits and interests . . . of the organism . . . [The word 'experience'] means just an immense and operative world of diverse and interacting elements."<sup>6</sup> Experience, thus conceived, is the criterion of reality. Such realities as knowledge and consciousness, selves and not-selves, are in experience and are parts of experience, not the whole nor the most important aspect of it. Experience "is the entire organic agent-patient in all its interaction with the environment, natural and social. . . . Experiencing is just certain modes of interaction, or correlation of

<sup>4</sup> *Experience and Nature*. Chicago: Open Court, 1926, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> P. A. Schilpp ed., *Northwestern University*: 1939.

<sup>6</sup> *Essays in Experimental Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916, pp. 6-7.



natural objects among which the organism happens, so to say, to be one.”<sup>7</sup> Some interpreters have taken such texts as these to commit Dewey to a holistic or monistic view of experience. Dewey explicitly denies this<sup>8</sup> and indeed he has repeatedly stated his pluralistic conviction. The only kind of pluralism he is concerned to reject is that which asserts “an ontological Pluralism of Ultimates: *simple and independent beings*.”<sup>9</sup> Pluralism of this sort is denied because, if consistent it would have to affirm that in existence there are immutable self-identical elements.

One may quarrel with the appropriateness of the word “experience” as used by Dewey but once the sense is learned his teaching is not exceptionally difficult. Experience, existence, change, time, real interaction between agents and patients, both personal and impersonal, are always found together. In reality thus conceived there are all kinds of differences, all kinds of similarities and all kinds of connections. But the differences and distinctions among the things of experience—things always being recognized as events—are not of the sort attributed to atomic particulars by empiricist philosophers of the classical type, nor are the similarities and connections which function in the field of experience of a kind which would lead to an absolutistic block-universe monism. Experience is a kind of continuum, but it is also a kind of aggregate, for Dewey. It is evident that we are far from all subjectivistic or phenomenalist views of experience. The particular and the general, the existential and the ideational, the sensible and the intellectual, are all ingredients in this single though not undivided experience. Experience involves “permanent and general objects of reference as well as temporally changing events . . .”<sup>10</sup> In existence there is an “intricate mixture of the stable and the precarious, the fixed and the unpredictably novel, the assured

<sup>7</sup> “The Need for a Recovery in Philosophy,” in *Creative Intelligence*, (by Dewey and others), New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1917, pp. 36-7.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. his rejoinder, in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 544 f.

<sup>9</sup> “The Need for a Recovery in Philosophy,” in *Creative Intelligence*, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Experience and Nature*, p. 60.

and the uncertain . . .” He speaks also of the “combinedly stable and unstable nature of the world.”<sup>11</sup> On Dewey’s view, the difficulty felt by the classical empiricist in accounting for universals and generality disappears. His teaching on this point is reiterated throughout his major works, notably in *The Quest for Certainty*. In his recent *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry*, he further clarifies his teaching concerning universals. Ways of change and activity are constant and uniform. Though not themselves singular they are exemplified in singulars.<sup>12</sup> May we say, then, that, according to Dewey, there are indeed immutable realities or “absolutes” though they are not existential—they are ideational? Such a statement, it must be emphasized, does not at all make fictions of universals. The ideational is just as much an element of experience in Dewey’s sense as the existential is: both are kinds, so to speak, of reality. The use of the word absolute in this connection may seem inappropriate or even shocking to many persons. But there is warrant for its use. In *Experience and Nature* we read that the existence of ways of being and having is “absolute, being qualitative.”<sup>13</sup> It is these “ways of being and having” which are the structural components of experience (Examples are: “*Being angry, stupid, wise, inquiring; having sugar, the light of day, money, houses . . .*”<sup>14</sup>) There are no structures or forms which exist *per se* and in themselves. Structure as constancy of means is always “structure of something.”<sup>15</sup> As an interpretation, consider the following. Structures are natures or forms which have two existences: in things (events) and in intelligence. In the former they are of course affected by the mutability and contingency of existential singulars. In intelligence form or structure is affected by the addition of the ideational universality characteristic of intelligence. In this way, the empiricism-rationalism dilemma is overcome. Hence the theory

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> *Logic*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>13</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> *Experience and Nature*, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

of experiential situations may be viewed as a middle way. The insights of empiricism (of the classical type) and pluralism, on the one hand, and of rationalism and monism, on the other, whose significance was formerly misconstrued may be seen as complementary rather than as mutually exclusive in virtue of the Dewey view of experience. Of course, if monism and pluralism are defined as contradictories, a philosophic theory must be one or the other. Thus considered, instrumentalism is a variety of pluralism, as we have seen. As such it has been called "concatenism" which term is intended to mean a pluralism of entities which do not exclude one another but are said to "overlap."<sup>16</sup> Dewey approves the word "overlap" when taken to refer to the fact that for genuine continuity of experience, an experience however unique in its own quality must be seen as containing "something that points to other experiences."<sup>17</sup>

This brief examination of Mr. Dewey's thought on some important matters may be summed up as follows: On the basis of his "experimental empiricism" or instrumentalism, he has rejected absolutism as held by organic metaphysics (monism) and as held by atomic metaphysics (extreme pluralism). In contrast with these older philosophies, he has developed a doctrine which admits against pluralism the reality of universals and relations as ideational constants (ways of acting and undergoing) and against monism the reality of individuals. Both the "Absolute" and particulars conceived as absolute and independent beings, existing as such, have been rejected. At the same time, the members of experience and their ways of interacting have been recognized to exhibit and exemplify structural constancy. Furthermore, his theory of experience as a field (as this term is employed in physics) or as consisting of situations may be considered to play a role similar to that played by the unquestioned or ultimate in earlier philosophies. This last

<sup>16</sup> Cf. William Savery, "The Significance of Dewey's Philosophy," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1928, pp. 488-9.

<sup>17</sup> "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder," in *op. cit.*, p. 545, n. 29.

interpretation has merely been suggested, not fully developed, but I am confident it could be shown more fully.<sup>18</sup>

### III

What is the relevance of the foregoing for the contemporary Thomist? The above considerations suggest numerous points upon which comparison and contrast would prove interesting but only a few can be mentioned in the present discussion.

Professor Dewey, as we saw, regards St. Thomas Aquinas as essentially an "organic metaphysician," to be classed with such philosophers as Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, et al. (Consideration of Dewey's interpretation of Aristotle and of the affinities between the two philosophers has to be omitted on account of limitations of space. On this point, consult the references to Aristotle in *The Quest for Certainty, Experience and Nature, Logic*, and J. H. Randall, Jr., "Dewey's Interpretation of the History of Philosophy," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, P. A. Schilpp ed.) This judgment, in my opinion, ignores some of the most important doctrines of authentic Thomism.<sup>18a</sup> In fact, St. Thomas and his important contemporary followers deny just as emphatically as does Dewey any plurality of absolute beings. The very essence of authentic Thomist teaching consists in the thesis that there is and can be only one absolute actually existent reality: God. Nowhere but in God does anything exist which is fixed or immutable without qualification. Furthermore, unlike that rationalism which finds it necessary to deny genuine reality to the Many in order to affirm it of the One, for Thomism the

<sup>18</sup> It goes without saying that I am not suggesting an interpretation of Dewey's conception of experience which would make him out to be a holist or monist, as Bertrand Russell's criticism infers. Cf. "Dewey's New *Logic*," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 143, and Dewey's "Rejoinder," *ibid.*, pp. 544-5.

<sup>18a</sup> Dewey's assimilation of St. Thomas to philosophers of Platonic or "essentialist" inspiration suggests that he has failed to appreciate the radical character of the innovations worked out by St. Thomas in his metaphysics of the created and contingent existential being. It is outside the aim of the present paper to present a more extensive analysis of Dewey's views on this point such as would be required for any useful criticism.



assertion of the existence of God does not require the removal of real reality from creatures. According to Thomism, the created world is one which consists of a real plurality of individual substances whose existence and efficaciousness in acting is not explained away by any form of Platonic or occasionalistic teaching concerning the everyday world of ordinary experience. The usual “-ism” terms of the historian of philosophy are very difficult of application to Thomism. In this doctrine the knowledge of the senses is no less necessary than the knowledge of the intellect. The reality of matter, the world of ever-changing corporeal substances, is affirmed just as strongly as the reality of spirit. Thomism, too, is a *via media* between monism and pluralism, and its theory of knowledge a synthesis of the partial truths found in rationalism and empiricism. One could go on to trace these parallels in greater detail, but for the present these simple indications must suffice.

Enough has been said, I think, to suggest the importance of this kind of study. It is surely never wise for any student of philosophy of whatever school to fail to explore with a view to understanding the most important contemporary philosophers of other schools. Professor Dewey once wrote that one factor interfering with a better understanding between the non-scholastic and those in the scholastic tradition was the assumption on the part of many of latter that scholasticism actually was in possession of final and clear statement of all philosophical truth and that, consequently most modern philosophers were in wilful error.<sup>10</sup> But contemporary Thomism, as taught by Jacques Maritain, certainly does not claim to be actually in possession of the one true philosophy in all its perfection and integrity. As Professor Maritain puts it: “We must be aware of the perpetual novelty proper to philosophical wisdom, defend the necessity for renovation and growth inscribed in its nature . . . against the prejudices of systematically traditionalist or immobilist minds.” The modern Thomist *does* claim that his philosophy is “a doctrinal organism founded securely as a

<sup>10</sup> In *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism*, John S. Zyburda ed., p. 31.

whole on true principles," which has the task of progressively realizing the virtual philosophy now divided in a plurality of opposed systems.<sup>20</sup> From this point of view, Dewey's thought is an instance of what Maritain calls "virtual philosophy" and it is therefore a guide for work to be done in furthering the vital progress of philosophy itself. It is only through mutual understanding and the search for truth wherever it is to be found that philosophy can advance as it should and must in days to come.

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<sup>20</sup> *Sept leçons sur l'être*, pp. 17-19; English tr., *A preface to metaphysics*, pp. 12-14.

*To Jacques Maritain:*

ARTHUR LOURIÉ

✠

DE ORDINATIONE  
ANGELORUM

✠

MOTET FOR MIXED CHOIR  
AND FIVE INSTRUMENTS

2 trumpets (C)  
2 trombones  
and tuba

Selection of texts by RAÏSSA MARITAIN

De ordinatione Angelorum secundum hierarchias et ordines  
Dionysius ponit:

In prima quidem hierarchia Seraphim ut primos,  
Cherubim ut medios,  
Thronos ut ultimos;

In media vero Dominationes ut primos,  
Virtutes ut medios,  
Potestates ut ultimos;

In ultima Principatus ut primos,  
Archangelos ut medios,  
Angelos ut ultimos. . . .

Invenitur autem congrua haec ordinum assignatio . . .

Primus autem ordo est divinarum personarum,  
qui terminatur ad Spiritum Sanctum,  
qui est Amor procedens;  
cum quo affinitatem habet  
supremus ordo hierarchia  
ab incendio amoris determinatus . . .

In prima hierarchia Seraphim, Cherubim et Throni;  
in media Dominationes, Virtutes et Potestates;  
in ultima Principatus, Archangeli et Angeli.

(Alleluia) .

Dominus dicit de Sanctis  
quod erunt sicut Angeli Dei in coelo . . .  
quod non erunt duae societates  
hominum et angelorum  
sed una  
quia omnium beatitudo est  
adhaerere uni Deo.

—*Summa Theologica*, I, Q. 108.



*De ordinatione Angelorum*

*Arthur Lœuic*

Tempo  $\text{♩} = 52$   
sempre  $\text{♩} = 104$   
 $\text{♩} = 208$

*Baryton Solo*  
*2 Trombones*  
*Tuba*

*De or-di-na-ti-o-ne An-ge-lo*

*rum se-cundum Hi-er-o-ni-mo-as et or-di-nes*

*Tenors*  
*De or-di-na-ti-o-ne An-ge-lo — rum se-cundum Hi-er-o-ni-mo-as et or-di-nes*

*Bass*

*Tenore*  
De or-di-na-ti-o-ne Ange-lo-rum se-cundum Hie-ro-ni-mum et

*Basso*

*2 Trombe (Hr)*

*Tuba*

*Alto* *pp*  
De ordi-natio-ne Ange-lo-rum se-cundum Hie-ro-ni-mum

*Tenore* *pp*  
or-di-nos De ordi-natio-ne Ange-lo-rum se-cundum Hie-ro-ni-mum

*Basso* *pp*

Handwritten musical score for a choir and piano. The score is divided into two systems. The first system has four staves: three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and one piano accompaniment staff. The second system has three staves: two vocal staves (Soprano, Alto) and one piano accompaniment staff. The lyrics are in French and Latin. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

*dim.*  
- as et or-di-nas

*dim.*  
- as et or-di-nas

*dim.*

*dim.*  
Di-o-my-si-us po *pp* *rit.*

Chœur I

*Sopr.* *pp* in pri-ma quiden hie-rar-chia Se-ra-phim ut pri-mos, che-ru-bim ut

*alto* *pp* in pri-ma quiden hie-rar-chia Se-ra-phim ut pri-mos, che-ru-bim ut

*Tenor* *pp* in pri-ma quiden hie-rar-chia Se-ra-phim ut pri-mos, che-ru-bim ut

*Basso* *pp*

*Tuba* *pp*

*pp* me-di-os, Tho-nos ut ul-ti-mos;

*pp* me-di-os, Tho-nos ut ul-ti-mos;

*pp* me-di-os, Tho-nos ut ul-ti-mos;

*pp* me-di-os, Tho-nos ut ul-ti-mos;

*pp*



# Chorus II

*Sops. div.*  
*altos*  
*Tenors*  
*Basses*

*in pri-ma quiden hié-rar-chia Se-ra-phim che-ra-bim Thro-nos*  
*in pri-ma quiden hié-rar-chia Sa-ra-phim ut pri-mos, che-ra-bim ut me-dios Thronos ut ul-ti-mos;*  
*in pri-ma quiden hié-rar-chia Se-ra-phim ut pri-mos, che-ra-bim ut me-dios Thronos ut ul-ti-mos;*

*Trumpets*  
*I*  
*II*  
*Trombones*  
*I*  
*II*  
*Tuba*

# Chœur III

Supra-  
div.  
Alto  
div.  
Trompette

en me-di-a ves-to

Sop.  
div.  
Alto  
unis.  
Trompette

Do — mi — na — ti — o — nes ut

pro — mos, Vir — tu — tas ut me-di-os,

pro — mos, Vir — tu — tas ut me-di-os,

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "Po — tes — ta — tes" written below it. The middle staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "Po — tes — ta — tes ut" written below it. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef with chords and eighth notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "ut ul — ti — mos;" written below it. The middle staff is a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics "ul — ti — mos; (al;)" written below it. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef with chords and eighth notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.





# Chœur V

Handwritten musical score for Chœur V. The score includes vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts (Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba). The lyrics are "in ul ti-ma" and "Prin-ci-pa-tus ut".

**Vocal Parts:**

- Soprano:** *mf* in ul ti-ma
- Alto:** *mf* in ul ti-ma
- Tenore:** *mf* in ul ti-ma
- Basso:** *mf* in ul ti-ma

**Instrumental Parts:**

- 2 Trombe:** *mf* *sanza sord.*
- 2 Tromboni:** *mf* *sanza sord.*
- Tuba:** *mf*

**Lyrics:**

in ul ti-ma

Prin-ci-pa-tus ut

Prin-ci-pa-tus ut

Prin-ci-pa-tus ut

Tuba

Handwritten musical score for a Latin hymn. The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and two piano staves (Right and Left Hand). The lyrics are: *pri-mos, Ar-chan-ge-los ut me-di-os, An-*. The second system continues the melody and includes the lyrics: *ge los ut ul-ti-mos...* and *ge - los ut ul - ti - mos...*. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand.

*pri-mos, Ar-chan-ge-los ut me-di-os, An-*

*pri-mos, Ar-chan-ge-los ut me-di-os, An-*

*ge los ut ul-ti-mos...*

*ge - los ut ul - ti - mos...*

# Chœur VI

*Supr. solo*  
In-ve-ni-tur au-tem congrua haec or-di-num assigna-ti-o...

*alto solo*

*Bariton solo*  
In-ve-ni-tur...

*Violoncello*  
*pp*

*Tuba*  
*pp*

*Sopr. alto (Tutti)*  
Primus autem ordo est di-vi-narum perso-na-rum,

*Tenor*

*Basse div.*  
*le sfz*

*Organo*  
*secco, stacc. sempre*

*Violoncello*  
*molto marcato*

*Tuba*  
*molto marcato*

*sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

qui ter-mi-na-tur ad Spi-ri-tum San-ctum

ia

sangre

qui est a-mor pro ce-dens;

le

lu

(u)

*sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p* *sfz* *p*



Handwritten musical score for "Missa" by Franz Liszt. The score is written on ten staves. The first staff has the lyrics "cum quo affi-ni-tar-ten habet supre-mus or-do pri-mae hie-rar-chiae". The music is in G major and 4/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "p" and "f".

*pp (Appassionato)*

Sop. *ab* in-cen-dio a-mo-ris de

alt. *dis.* in-cen-dio

Tenor *ab* in cen-dio a-mo-ris de

Bass

Trumpet

Trumpet

Tuba

no-mi-na (a) (a) - tus..."

a-mo-ris

no-mi-na - (a) (a) - tus..."

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

pp *dolcissimo*  
In pri-ma-ti-er-on-chi-a Sa-ra-phim, Che-ru-bim — et Tho-ro-ni;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
In pri-ma-ti-er-on-chi-a Sa-ra-phim, Che-ru-bim — et Tho-ro-ni;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
In pri-ma-ti-er-on-chi-a Sa-ra-phim, Che-ru-bim — et Tho-ro-ni;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
In pri-ma-ti-er-on-chi-a Sa-ra-phim, Che-ru-bim — et Tho-ro-ni;  
con sord.  
pp *dolcissimo*  
con sord.  
pp *dolcissimo*  
in me-di-a Do-mi-na-ti-o — nes, Vir-tu — tes et Po-tes-ta — tes;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
in me-di-a Do-mi-na-ti-o — nes, Vir-tu — tes et Po-tes-ta — tes;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
in me-di-a Do-mi-na-ti-o — nes, Vir-tu — tes et Po-tes-ta — tes;  
pp *dolcissimo*  
pp *dolcissimo*

in ul-ti-ma Prin-ci-pa-tus, Ar-cha-ni-ge-li et An-ge-

in ul-ti-ma Prin-ci-pa-tus, Ar-cha-ni-ge-li et An-ge-

in ul-ti-ma Prin-ci-pa-tus, Ar-cha-ni-ge-li et An-ge-

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)

-li. (Al-le-lu- - - - ia.)







quod non e-runt du-ae so-cie-ta-tes ho-minum et angelo-rum sed u-na

quod non e-runt du-ae so-cie-ta-tes ho-minum et angelo-rum sed u-na

quod non e-runt du-ae so-cie-ta-tes ho-minum et angelo-rum sed u-na

quod non e-runt du-ae so-cie-ta-tes ho-minum et angelo-rum sed u-na

[illegible]



*Chorus tacet*

*Tempo poco più mosso al fine*

*mp marcato, ma non troppo forte sonare*

*mp marcato, ma non troppo forte sonare*

Handwritten musical score for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Trumpet, Trombone, and Tuba. The score is written on seven staves. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) have lyrics: *quia om-ni-um* and *be-a-ti-tu-do*. The instrumental parts (Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba) include markings for *marcato* and *marcato*. The score is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The vocal parts are in a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass clef. The instrumental parts are in a trumpet, trombone, and tuba clef. The score is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The vocal parts are in a soprano, alto, tenor, and bass clef. The instrumental parts are in a trumpet, trombone, and tuba clef.

Sopr.  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass  
Trumpet  
Trombone  
Tuba

*quia om-ni-um* *be-a-ti-tu-do*  
*quia om-ni-um* *be-a-ti-tu-do*  
*quia om-ni-um* *be-a-ti-tu-do*  
*quia om-ni-um* *be-a-ti-tu-do*

*marcato*  
*marcato*

Handwritten musical score for three voices and piano. The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system consists of four staves: three for voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and one for piano. The second system also consists of four staves: three for voices and one for piano. The lyrics "est adhaere-re" are written under the vocal staves. The piano part includes the instruction "marcatissimo al fine".

est adhaere-re

est adhaere-re

est adhaere-re

marcatissimo al fine

Handwritten musical score for four voices and basso continuo. The score is written on ten staves, with the first four staves representing the voices and the last three staves representing the basso continuo. The music is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system shows the vocal entries with long melodic lines. The second system shows the voices and continuo playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is signed "Carmel / N.Y. / 1942" in the bottom right corner.

*(Summa Theologiae I, Quaestio 108)*

*Carmel / N.Y. / 1942*



# A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN: 1910-1942

Compiled by RUTH BYRNS

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THE first section of this bibliography lists the writings in French and English of Jacques Maritain from 1910 to November, 1942. The arrangement is by years. Directly after each annual heading books and parts of books by M. Maritain are listed in alphabetical order according to titles. Articles, also listed in alphabetical order according to titles, follow the listings of books and parts of books. Prefaces by M. Maritain to the books of other authors are then listed according to the authors' names. Translations from French to English are noted but the bibliography does not include translations of M. Maritain's works in the many other languages into which his writings have been rendered. A small number of his works which originally appeared in Spanish are included in the bibliography.

The second part of the bibliography lists articles and other works about M. Maritain for the same period. The arrangement of this part of the bibliography is alphabetical according to the names of the authors. This part of the bibliography also includes only (with a few exceptions) articles in French and English.

Book reviews written by M. Maritain and reviews of his books by others are not included in either section of the bibliography. Likewise, newspaper reports of addresses by M. Maritain are not included in the bibliography nor are statements which he signed as a member of a committee or as one of a group of signers.

Every reasonable effort was taken to make both sections of the bibliography complete and accurate. The items were checked with standard bibliographies and periodical indices as well as with the bibliography of Maritain printed in *The Catholic Library World*, May, 1942, and with a selected, unpublished

bibliography of M. Maritain's writings prepared by Miss Lois Byrns of the University of Wisconsin. Nearly all of the books and nearly all of the articles listed were examined personally by the compiler. In some cases it was not possible, at this time, to secure a copy for examination.

However, in spite of this effort, it is likely—because of the many difficulties in completing a bibliography such as this one—that there are omissions and errors in this Maritain bibliography. Readers who discover omissions or errors are requested to send a notation of the missing items or the mistakes to the compiler of the bibliography.

## PART I

### WRITINGS OF JACQUES MARITAIN

1910 TO NOVEMBER 1942

1910

1. "LE NÉO-VITALISME EN ALLEMAGNE ET LE DARWINISME." *Revue de Philosophie*. 6: pp. 417-441. 1910.
2. "LA SCIENCE MODERNE ET LA RAISON." *Revue de Philosophie*. 6: pp. 575-603. 1910.  
In *Antimoderne*, 1922. See item 22, pp. 29-68.

1911

3. "L'ÉVOLUTIONNISME DE M. BERGSON". *Revue de Philosophie*. 19: p. 467 f. 1911.

1913

4. "L'ESPRIT DE LA PHILOSOPHIE MODERNE. I. LA RÉFORME CARTÉSIENNE." *Revue de Philosophie*. 24: pp. 601-625. 1913.  
La première des quatre conférences données sous ce titre en avril-mai, 1914, à l'Institut Catholique de Paris.
5. "L'INTUITION. AU SENS DE CONNAISSANCE INSTINCTIVE OU D'INCLINATION." *Revue de Philosophie*. 23: pp. 5-13.  
"Fragment d'une des leçons sur la philosophie de Bergson et la philosophie chrétienne."
6. "LA PHILOSOPHIE DE M. BERGSON ET LA PHILOSOPHIE CHRÉ-

TIENNE." Cours et conférences de la *Revue de Philosophie* à l'Institut Catholique de Paris, 1913.

"... qui paraîtront prochainement dans la Bibliothèque de Philosophie expérimentale. . . ." See item 7, below.

## 1914

7. LA PHILOSOPHIE BERGSONNIENNE: ÉTUDES CRITIQUES. Paris: Rivière, 1914.

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8. "L'ESPRIT DE LA PHILOSOPHIE MODERNE. II. L'INDEPENDANCE DE L'ESPRIT." *Revue de Philosophie*. 25: pp. 53-82. 1914.

"... la seconde des quatre conférences données sous ce titre en avril-mai, 1914, à l'Institut Catholique de Paris."

9. "LA LIBERTÉ INTELLECTUELLE." 1914.

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## 1918

10. "LA PHYSIQUE DE LA QUANTITÉ ET LA RÉVOLUTION CARTÉSIENNE." 1918.

In *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre*, 1924. See item 36, below, pp. 174-201.

11. PREFACE to: Clerissac, H., O. P. *Le mystère de l'église*. Paris: 1918.

## 1919

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See: Item 53, below and item 60, below.

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Translations: English. By John O'Connor. *The Philosophy of Art*. 1923. Item 28, below.

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15. "RÉFLEXIONS SUR LE TEMPS PRÉSENT." 1920.  
In *Antimoderne*, 1922. See item 22, below, pp. 195-223.
16. "LE SONGE DE DESCARTES." *Revue Universelle*, December,  
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item 92, below.

## 1921

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36, below, pp. 262-287.
21. PREFACE to: Driesch, Hans. *La Philosophie de l'organisme*. . .  
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## 1922

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"La liberté intellectuelle," 1914, pp. 71-109. Item 9, above.  
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113-156. Item 14, above.



"Connaissance de l'être," 1922, pp. 159-192. Item 23, below.

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24. "DE LA MÉTAPHYSIQUE DES PHYSICIENS OU DE LA SIMULTANÉITÉ SELON EINSTEIN." 1922-24.

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25. "DE LA VÉRITÉ." 1922.

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27. SAINT THOMAS D'AQUIN, APÔTRE DES TEMPS MODERNES. Paris: Éditions de la Revue des Jeunes, 1923.

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41. TROIS RÉFORMATEURS: LUTHER, DESCARTES, ROUSSEAU. Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie., 1925.  
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## 1926

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51. PREFACE to: Bloy, Léon. *La Femme pauvre*. Paris, 1926.
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53. ART ET SCOLASTIQUE. Nouvelle édition revue, et augmentée. Paris: Louis Rouart et fils. 1927.  
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1930

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## PART II

## WRITINGS ABOUT JACQUES MARITAIN

TO NOVEMBER 1942

(AUTHOR NOT LISTED)

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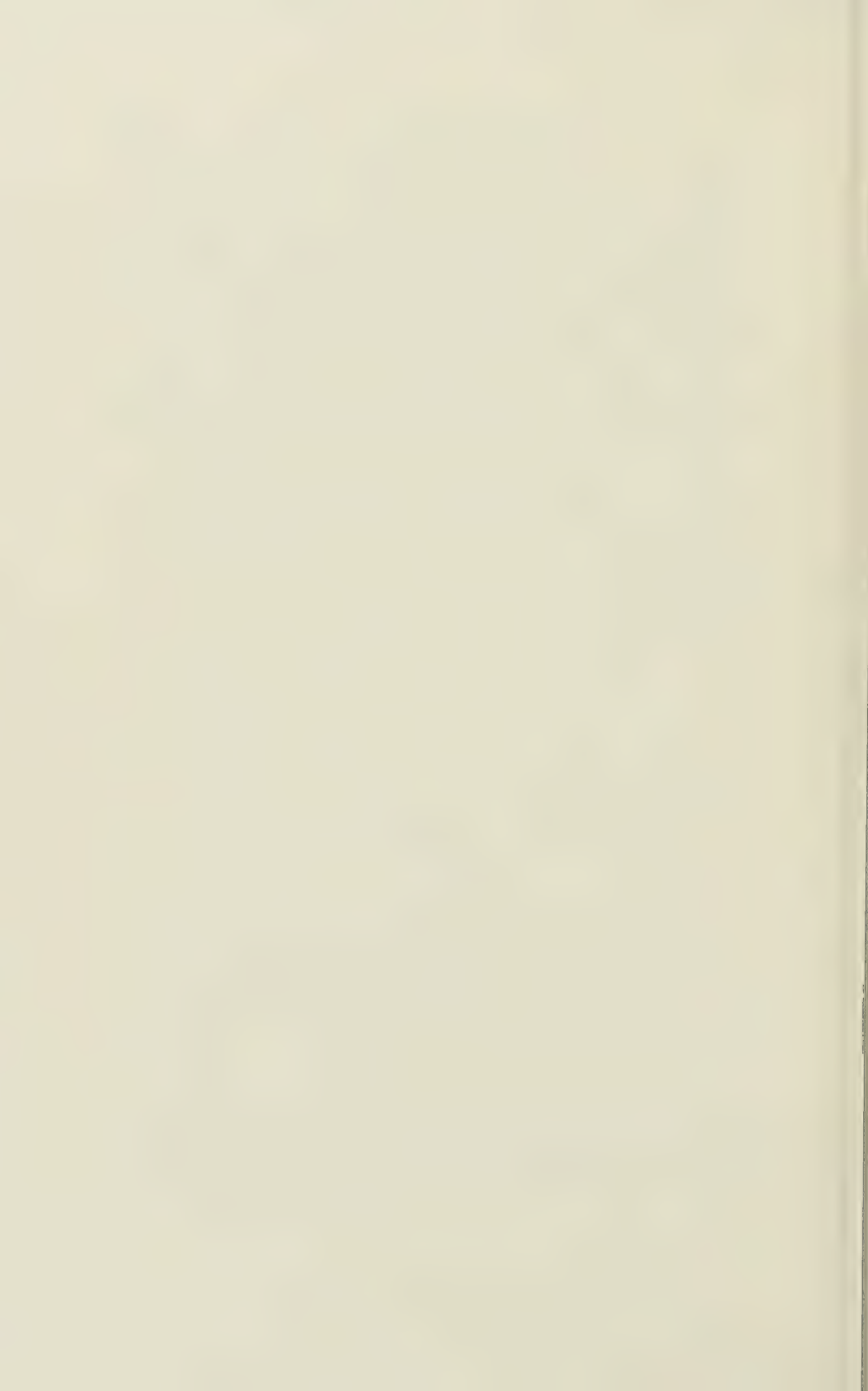


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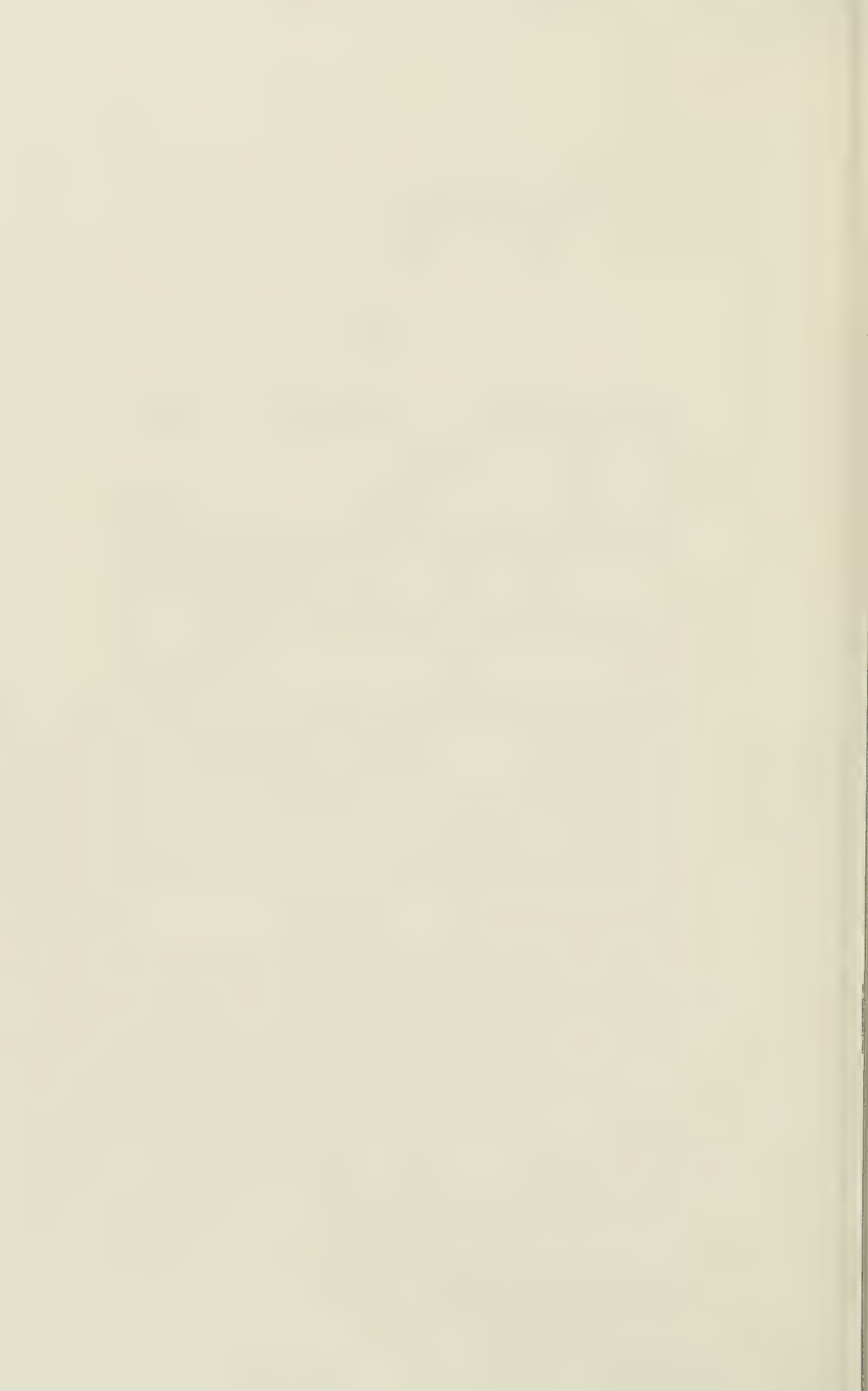
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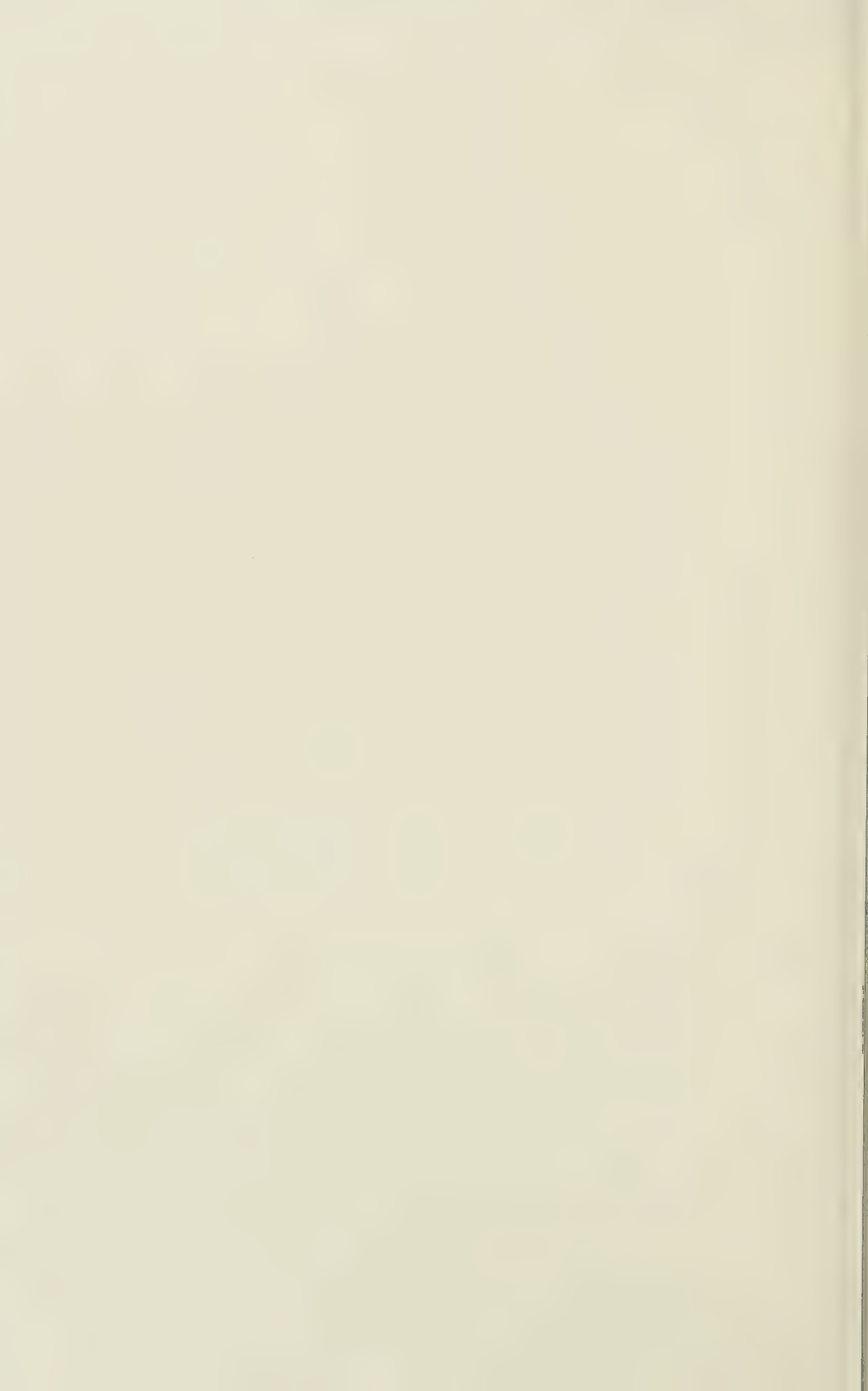
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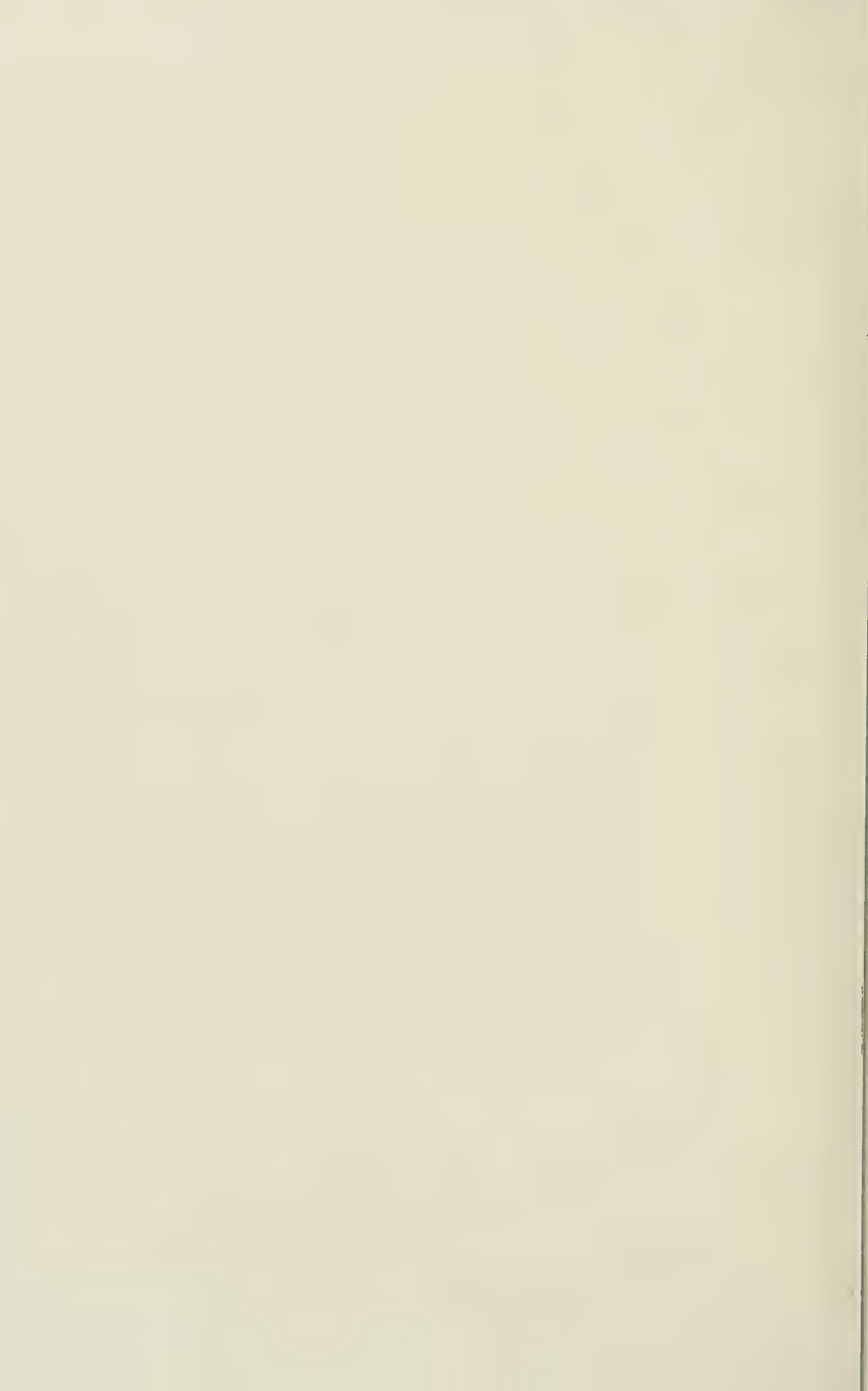






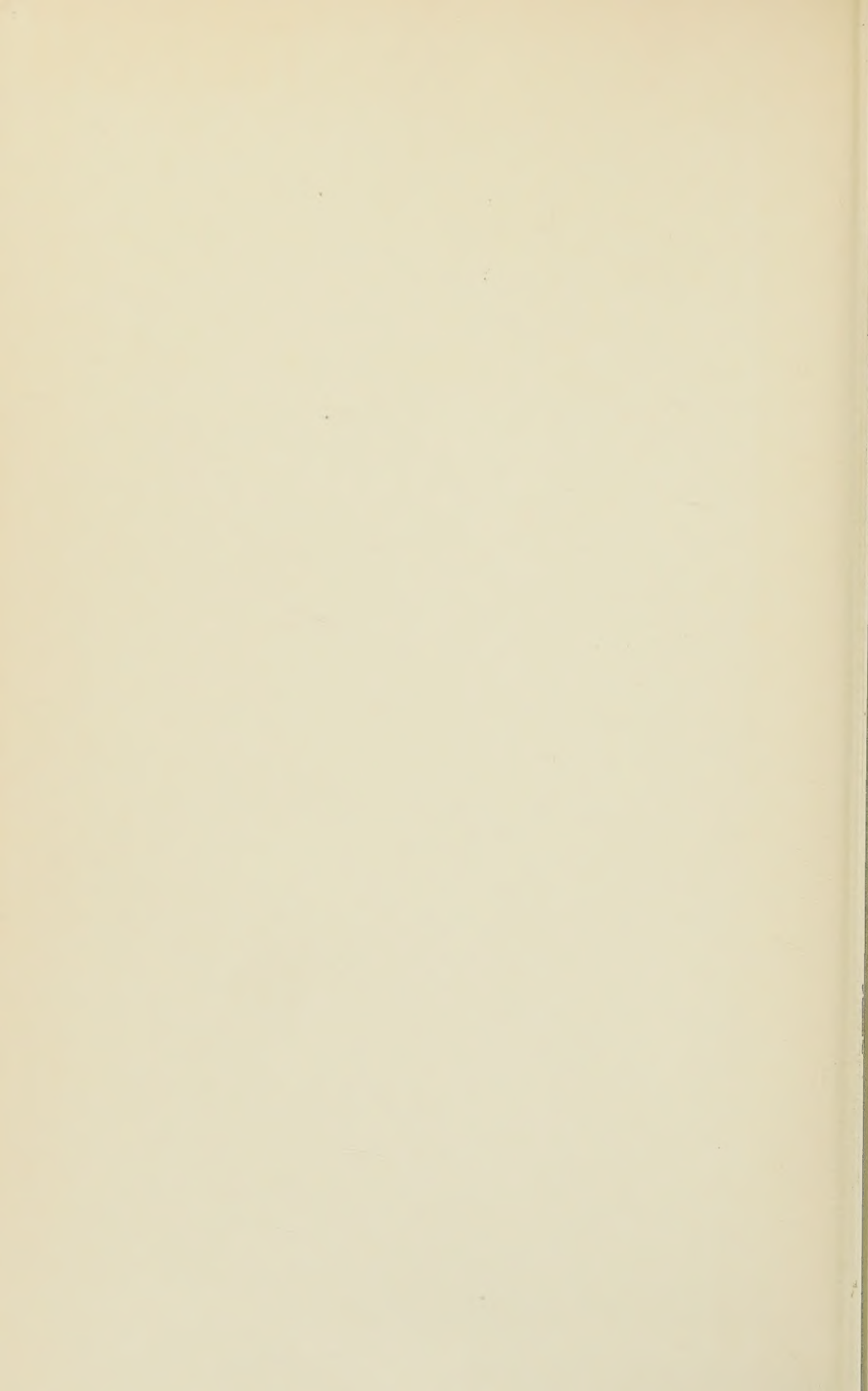












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